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THE RELATIONS
OF
CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE
TO
MENTAL CULTURE.

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GRADUATING CLASS OF WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY,
JULY 1848.

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THE RELATION
OF
CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE
TO
MENTAL CULTURE.

As he thinketh in his heart, so is he.—PROV. xxiii, 7.

It is a recognized principle of ethical philosophy, no less than of the gospel, that the quality of actions, considered as virtuous or vicious, resides wholly in the intention. The external bodily movement, which we term the action, and which is the apparent cause of the effect produced, has really no moral character. It is neither good nor evil in itself; and in forming our judgment of human conduct we might reject the external manifestation altogether, had we some other clew to the mental condition of which it is the exponent. But "the tree is known by its fruit." It is by attentively observing the

actions of men that we are enabled to arrive at satisfactory conclusions concerning their intentions, which alone are deserving of either praise or blame. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." He may be a thoroughly good man—"pure in heart," just in the sight of God; and yet, through some fault of his position, or some negligence, or some untowardness in his methods of manifestation, he may impress the beholder unfavorably—may incur a most undesirable reputation. He may, on the contrary, studiously maintain all the decencies and semblances of many virtues; may, for sinister or selfish ends, perform good deeds rivaling in their number and usefulness the highest achievements of the most approved and unquestionable piety; without making the slightest approach toward the fulfillment of his duties as a moral being: "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he." Outward performances are of no worth apart from the motives in which they originate. The same overt act is either a virtue or a crime, according to the intention of the agent. Several men bestow money upon a poor

neighbor: the first gives it as the price of waylaying an enemy; the second, to purchase a vote; the third, to relieve pressing want; the last, as the steward and dispenser of God's bounty intrusted to him. This one act of giving to the poor is so modified by motives as to be in the first instance an atrocious crime; in the second, gross profligacy; in the third, an act of charity; in the fourth, a deed of Christian piety. So true is it of every man, in regard to every act of his life, that he is as his intentions are: motive, not performance, determines moral character.

The same maxim is true when applied to intellectual character: "As a man thinketh, so is he." The human mind is as the thoughts with which it is chiefly conversant. It is very much the creature of its own ideas. The man who from early life has been familiar with topics and interests of great significance, is educated by them. His intellect takes its character and coloring from the ideas which habitually act upon it and dwell in it. Even the sights and sounds that engage his outward senses—the beautiful

landscape, or the sublime mountain scenery upon which he has long been accustomed to gaze ; the roar of the cataract which sends forth its thunder night and day near his dwelling-place—will by and by be found to have filled the imagination and the memory with images and recollections, and the heart with sentiments, which are likely to exert a strong and permanent influence upon his mental capacity, character, and destiny. Still more must every-day pursuits, and the profound interests that suggest the current topics of conversation and thought, and that impose upon the mind its most stirring, strenuous employments, leave upon it durable impressions, and become chief and influential conditions of its development and growth. If two individuals, equal in capacity and education, spend their lives in a great industrial establishment, the one as owner or superintendent, the other as a common laborer ; the master is likely to become a man of decided ability, of comprehensive views, inventive genius, and sound judgment, while the operative makes no progress beyond the acquisition of some degree of skill in his own spe-

cial department. The first has a variety of interests to consult, and responsibilities to meet; has questions to settle, and decisions to make, every day or hour, upon which are suspended results of no inconsiderable moment. This gives variety, multiplicity, and activity to his ideas, and the mind expands and acquires new vigor by such processes. The work of the subaltern, on the contrary, is mere routine, and his mind stagnates and dwindles amid the incessant monotonous whirling of spindles and water-wheels. It is no unusual thing for travelers in Turkey and other oriental states to meet with high public functionaries totally ignorant of all the arts and sciences, a knowledge of which, in our part of the world, constitutes education. Many of them, however, are men of decided ability, who discharge the duties of their high stations with the utmost propriety. The most sagacious and successful ruler in the East knows nothing of literature and science beyond the poorest skill in reading and writing, and this he acquired after his elevation to supreme power, at forty years of age. These men are educated by the

important responsible employments which give constant play to their intellectual faculties, and enlarge the mind by habitual familiarity with significant ideas. That is likely to become the most powerful intellect which is most constantly and earnestly busied with great thoughts and great designs. Every religious congregation affords good illustration of this truth. We never fail to observe a higher tone of intelligence as well as piety among a people accustomed to contemplate and devise extensive schemes for doing good, not at home merely, but in distant lands and in the islands of the sea, than prevails, or can prevail, in the old stereotyped churches, which are well content if they can only take care of themselves. The mind wants an ample supply of worthy ideas to furnish it with interesting, productive occupation. With these it must make progress and attain development; but without them, never. This truth is important, not to students only, but to all who desire mental growth and discipline. It is especially important for those who labor at occupations little friendly to intellectual improvement. Such persons

should seek a remedy for the disadvantage of their position, by reading good books, which are the great store-houses of ideas and thoughts, and which offer a ready and sufficient resource.

I but draw a legitimate inference from the preceding discussion, and announce the obvious truth of the text in another form, in affirming that the moral character of a man is as his principles; that it is not only colored and modified, but formed, by his principles, or the *theory* according to which his life is conducted. As each separate action derives its quality from the motive in which it originates; so the series of actions which constitutes the history of an individual is as the succession of motives from which they proceed, or as the moral principles, which in every well-balanced mind constitute the great source and regulator of motives.

By a similar train of reasoning it will be made obvious that the mental character must, to a great extent, be the result of the theory on which the individual resolves to conduct his life. If the mind at any given

time receives its impulses, its elevation, and its tendencies, from the particular ideas upon which it is employed ; its general character must, to a great extent, be not only affected, but formed, by that unbroken succession of ideas with which it is conversant, the most influential and important of which are derived from those profound convictions and stable purposes usually denominated the *principles*. Dismissing these too metaphysical forms of expression, into which I have been led in quest of clearness and precision, it may be stated in general terms, that a man's moral and intellectual character are as "he thinketh in his heart"—are as those deep and earnest thoughts which constitute the moving forces of the soul, and which regulate the life.

I think we may now regard the doctrine of the text as sufficiently elucidated. It strikes me much like a self-evident proposition, the announcement of which brings with it the clearest conviction of its truth. It falls in with every man's experience, and every man's observation—with the nature of things, and the word of God ; and we may

now feel at liberty to proceed with some inferences and applications of a practical character, adapted to the special demands of this occasion. I will subjoin but one more preliminary remark. If it shall seem to any that I lose sight of the differences between moral and intellectual objects, and confound ideas logically and really distinct, I refer them to the further developments of this discourse, for the justification of a method deliberately adopted from a strong conviction that every just theory of intellectual training must recognize a dependence nearly absolute upon moral principles.

I. It is a natural and obvious inference from the preceding discussion, that every man, and especially every educated young man, should furnish himself, as early as may be, with enlightened, stable principles of action. He should set out in the world with a well-considered and earnestly adopted theory of life, in obedience to whose controlling authority his ends shall be chosen and his efforts prosecuted. To engage in a career involving consequences profoundly interesting in themselves, and eternal in

their duration and influence, without settled principles and aims, is like setting sail upon the broad ocean with no specific destination; and consequently with no reason for choosing one direction rather than another, but such as capricious gales, or more capricious fancies, may from time to time happen to supply. Nothing less than discomfiture and disaster could be expected from such a beginning. It is indeed among things possible, that propitious breezes may waft the unpiloted bark into some desirable haven; and even that the fury of the storm may drive the floating wreck upon some green or some golden shore, where reckless adventure may gather rewards never due, and seldom granted to anything but prudent foresight, and well-directed, persevering effort. He is little better than a madman, however, who voluntarily consents to expose the most precious interests of his being to a conflict of chances in which the highest perils are always imminent, and absolute ruin nearly unavoidable; while success, if it come, as the result of fortuitous causes and combinations, is likely to be nearly value-

less, because not foreseen and provided for. That course of life which is entered upon without principle, and conducted without a plan, cannot but be unproductive of either virtue, happiness, or honor. That it is not wholly filled up with misfortunes and disgraces, and rendered to the victim of his own follies one unvaried scene of wretchedness, results from the benignant arrangements of divine Providence, which always protect the imprudent and the vicious against many of the consequences of their misconduct, and secure to all such a measure of enjoyment as shall make life tolerable, even to the most unfortunate, and awaken gratitude in the midst of disappointment and shame. For those who will not be at the trouble of subjecting themselves to the control of principle and duty, it is fortunate to be left in the walks of common, laborious life; where, in the absence of the higher motives which reason and religion supply, domestic instincts and urgent wants are ever at hand to minister their stern impulses to energetic, persevering activity. The great law of necessity, which prescribes to the multitude

their toilsome course of life, is faithful to exact the fulfillment of its duties ; but for those whom fortune or parental indulgence, or their own honorable aspirations, allow to choose a higher career, no such safeguard is provided. They must find incentives to action, and guaranties of success, in their own enlightened reason and virtuous resolution. For them to engage in the elevating pursuits which invite their presence, without the moral and mental prerequisites to success, is to incur necessary, unavoidable disasters. In the absence of established principles of action, their efforts will be feeble and fitful. The long labor of preparation will be but a heartless, profitless task, from which feeble temptations and worthless pleasures will ever be sufficient to draw away the wavering, irresolute disciple. Every folly which holds out the promise of stimulating excitement or vulgar merriment ; every vice which has a gilded bait to offer ; has its eye upon him as a predestined victim. Destitute of any sound principle of action, and therefore without purpose or earnestness, he floats a waif upon a sea of accidents

—he stands idle in the market-place, a laborer out of work, labeled and advertised as a candidate for any and every adventure. I do not hesitate to announce it as my deliberate opinion, that most of the miscarriages of scholastic life are the result of the causes here discussed. Not a few young men enter upon this career without settled principles or purposes. They are conscious of no aims. They know not why they are in a college rather than in a factory or a corn-field. It is no manly, vigorous purpose; no lofty aspiration; no burning zeal for God's glory, or human well-being—that has brought them here. Such motives dignify and consecrate the student's vocation; they hallow all his hours and opportunities; they exalt industry and sobriety, and punctuality and order, into cardinal virtues; they fortify the soul with sturdy resolution, and stir it with sleepless impulses; they set it all a-blaze with scholarly enthusiasm, and lead on even ordinary men, by no means highly gifted, to the attainment of an intellectual and moral efficiency very like genius. The

pursuit of knowledge under such benignant auspices can never be an irksome task. It rather becomes a mission in fulfillment of which the student works on consciously and genially, growing every day more and more a man, fit to bear God's image in the world, and to act the part of a brother and a benefactor in the great suffering family, of which he is one.

The other class of students, and I must admit that it does not everywhere lack the respectability of numbers, find college work, so far as they do it, mere drudgery. They taste none of the pleasures of science, and they reap none of the higher advantages of education; for these are gained by voluntary, earnest co-operation, with the sources of information and the appliances which literary institutions profess to supply. Something, no doubt, may be gained to taste and general intelligence by breathing a literary atmosphere, and by a half involuntary subjection to the processes of the study and the lecture-room; and if it shall turn out that the literary idler inhales somewhat more of the vital principle, than he

gives out of noxious effluvia for the lungs of others, then there may be advantage in the experiment. But against these benefits, however highly they may be rated, there is to be taken into our account the offset of many fearful evils liable to be suffered and inflicted. The mind without a guiding principle, or recognized vocation, if it be not neutralized and wasted by its own feeble, misdirected, conflicting tendencies, will hardly escape a corrupting thralldom from the accidental or malicious influences to which it is exposed. Refusing its homage to the right and the true, and so spurning the protection of practical virtue, it becomes an easy prey to unsuspected enemies. Other minds, as empty and listless as itself, or the weakest combination of accidents, impose law upon him who will not choose to be his own master. The poor jests that fall from the idler or wag who sits by his side at the dinner-table or in the lecture-room; or the current nonsense of the clique whom chance, or some more formal bond of union, has made his chosen associates; fashion his senti-

ments, and become chief agents in the formation of his mental and moral habits.* These appoint his aims; and pronounce *ex cathedra* judgments more authoritative than university statutes, or the counsel of the most judicious instructors. In obedience to such oracles it is, that green, unfurnished youths, resolve that the real hinderances to mental improvement and to the development of genius are hard study and solid science; and that some light reading, and vapid declamation—above all, the edifying discourses and flashy criticisms of the coterie—are able to form them great orators, and, if they like, great authors and statesmen. Let it not be imagined that these are mere idle fancies, which disappear with the hour that gives them birth. If they take the guise of very palpable absurdities when exposed in their true point of view, they very often present themselves upon the theatre of practical education as real, insuperable obstacles, in the way of all improvement. They often render attendance on college terms and college exercises

* See Note A.

nearly useless to the pupil, and the teacher's office a laborious, vexatious nullity. All good influences are lost upon such purposeless, wayward, obstinate minds. The accidents to which they surrender the conduct of their intellect and their lives may, indeed, by rare good fortune, impress upon them some form of intelligence and virtue. Some higher, purer current, of the fickle winds to which they commit their course, may chance to harden into habits not wholly detestable some of the transient phases exhibited in the ever-varying phenomena of their mental progress. Still it would be idle to expect satisfactory results from causes so inadequate, and methods so utterly unsound. Success will be the rare exception—failure the rule. I repeat the opinion already expressed, that here is to be found the source of the manifold grievous disappointments which so often fall to the lot of so-called educated men. There is no reason, in the nature of things, why one-third of college-bred young men should prove unfit for the professions for which liberal education is designed to prepare

them, while nineteen in twenty of all who are apprenticed to mechanics and artisans turn out competent workmen. We do not demand that all educated men shall prove to be geniuses, or shall attain to the highest professional distinction. All, however, not essentially deficient in ordinary mental endowments, are capable of gaining the mental discipline which it is the business of schools and colleges to impart, and which is requisite in the functions to the fulfillment of which society calls its educated men. The thing most requisite to success in these avocations is not brilliant talent, but the due preparation and use of those average capacities which God bestows impartially upon the race. These can only be secured by diligent, persevering study, pursued upon a plan and upon principle; and it is because so large a class of so-called students have neither principle nor plan, that so many of them fall out by the way, and so many others, who manage to pass through college, are destined to a life of mortification and disappointment.

I pass on to another remark. Since

established principles of action are so essential to success, we ought to use great caution in the adoption of our principles, for all are not equally good.

It must be admitted that any effective principle of action, not absolutely vicious, is better than none. Action upon low and adulterated motives is preferable to the intellectual stagnation which results from a want of strong impulses, and earnest, stable purpose. It is better to be driven furiously over rocks and shoals by Borean gales, than to reel and swelter, and take the plague, in the calms of the torrid zone. Still it is a matter of great moment to commence and prosecute our plans of life on an elevating and genial theory; for in it both moral and mental character are deeply involved.

Many young men choose a literary and professional career in preference to more active and laborious pursuits, from a deliberate comparison of the advantages which each is supposed to offer. They resolve to escape from the plough and the workshop, because they are disgusted with mere manual labor, and fancy that they feel

within them the presence of mental aptitudes, which, with due culture, may raise them to ease or affluence. It cannot be denied that such persons have chosen for themselves a principle of action of great potency, which may stimulate to persevering industry, and even high enterprise. It is a motive of sufficient efficiency to insure stability of purpose and of action, and may, with great probability, lead on to thorough scholarship and professional eminence. It even offers guaranties for correct morals, as well as for mental improvement; for they who are earnestly engaged in serious occupations, have seldom leisure or inclination for vice and dissipation. Self-interest, however, though a highly efficient, and, in the absence of better, a very useful motive, cannot be regarded a worthy principle of action for an intelligent moral being. It is not good, in the long run, either for the intellect or the heart. In its higher developments it is philosophically incompatible with the active existence of several of the most valuable sentiments and virtues that enrich and

adorn the human character. It cannot, for instance, coexist with magnanimity, or benevolence, or generosity, or public spirit. When fairly enthroned as the rule of life, it gradually, but inevitably, loses all kind consideration for the welfare of others, or for any interest that cannot be made subservient to individual aggrandizement; and then it is that we clearly perceive its malignant character. Now this is the point to which it perpetually tends; and that must be pronounced a vicious principle of action which, however useful in special circumstances, becomes intolerable the moment it obtains a full development. Our motives of action, in order to achieve the utmost for character, should be such as gain new force and momentum with our progress in wisdom and virtue; but the motive in question just then grows into a manifest, monstrous evil, fatal alike to virtue, and piety, and happiness. Its influence upon the intellectual character is scarcely less disastrous than upon the moral. The mind which was well-disciplined, under the impulses of a principle of so much energy,

and so sagacious, soon finds itself shut in from all enlargement by a system, of which self, and not man, nor the universe, nor God, is the centre. The heart becomes hard, and the conscience seared, in their perpetual conflicts with the claims of sympathy and charity; and this is equivalent to affirming that all the fountains of genial sentiment are congealed into ice, or indurated into stone. Insensibility to the interests of others is confessedly fatal to all true persuasive eloquence. As the selfish man, sooner or later, becomes an object of indifference or detestation to the world, he can never secure the reputation and the influence needful to move or control other minds. He can no more be a poet than an orator, for he does not love or reverence nature, or man, or God. Nor do I see how he can possibly be a philosopher; how he can attain to the love of truth—except for the gain it may bring him; how he can have a heart to appreciate great discoveries in the earth or the heavens, in any higher spirit than that which rejoices in the acquisition of the precious gem acci-

dentally brought to light in geological researches, or in the glitter and costliness of the instruments with which science prosecutes its inquiries.

It would, perhaps, be unjust to liberally educated men, and yet more to the youthful student, to intimate that selfish motives operate upon them with peculiar force. He has probably surrendered himself to the dominion of more honorable sentiments: he has chosen ambition as his guiding star, and spends the midnight oil amid visions of future renown. I believe that ambition does operate much more frequently and powerfully upon intelligent young men than self-interest; and I gladly admit that it is a far more elevated and honorable principle of action. It emancipates the aspiring mind from a degrading bondage to those material interests which turn away its vision from all things genial and ennobling, and concentrate upon self the expansive sympathies that were meant for mankind. By presenting reputation and influence as the most desirable objects of pursuit, it prescribes the cultivation of

such virtues and accomplishments as render a man agreeable to his fellows, and so far provides for the interest and happiness of the species. Scope is thus given for some exercise of the charities of our nature, and for some degree of the virtues of patriotism and public spirit; an advantage which raises ambition immeasurably above mere gross selfishness as a motive for mental culture. That rule of life, however, is essentially defective and faulty which proposes public favor and applause as a motive for the acquisition of knowledge or the cultivation of virtue. They who follow it, seldom become either wise or virtuous; for they will soon discover that superficial attainments, and the semblances of virtue, are more easy, and not less sure, passports to popularity, than the realities of which they are the cheap substitutes and gaudy counterfeits. Knowledge and virtue come to be regarded only as means, less valuable and less desirable than the ends they are used to promote; and they will be abandoned without scruple for other expedients found to be of equal or greater efficacy.

Thus degraded to the level of mere instruments, they lose their moral character, and, with it, their reflex power over the mind and the heart. It is thus that ambition, which, at the outset, frequently exerts a powerful and conservative influence upon the student, becomes, after no great length of time, a thoroughly misleading element, hostile alike to intellectual and moral advancement. This is its inherent vice, which must operate with greater or less force, even in the study, and throughout the forming period of life. In the turmoil of riper years, and amid the temptations of a public career, its sway often becomes absolute, and not many are found able to resist its deteriorating influences. Indeed, ambition finds little indulgence, even in the judgment of the world. We too incautiously, perhaps, laud an ambitious student; but to apply this epithet to a man of mature years, to a statesman, or an aspirant for office, is equivalent to pronouncing him unworthy of public confidence. Ambition is like self-interest in this, that it ministers useful impulses in the preparatory

stages of life, and in the absence of strong temptations ; but it eventually undermines the character, and seduces both the intellect and the heart. When once the ambitious scholar has become an ambitious politician, there is commonly an end to all mental and moral improvement. Tact and demagogueism answer his new aims far better than divine philosophy ; and he has entered a region of temptation too strong for ordinary virtue. Party arrangements and obligations are not long in weaving their meshes for the conscience, which soon learns submission to the code of morality that prefers the popular and the politic to the true and the right. A thousand sad histories, fulfilled and fulfilling among us, will tell, without more argument, by what sure, though it may be slow, gradations, the ingenuous, studious youth of twenty-one, is led on by this *ignis fatuus* to be at forty an unprincipled, time-serving demagogue, without principle, reputation, or honorable aspirations. Let every young man beware of surrendering himself to the leading of unchastened ambition. Let him shun, as

the gates of death, the arena of partisan strife and preferment. Let him patiently seek, in some honest calling, independence of all parties and offices. It may be that intelligence and virtue will be wanted some day on the political stage, and he may then ascend it with clean hands and a good conscience, and with the full advantage of all the wisdom and reputation with which he has fortified his character in the innocence of private life.

There is still another motive to literary activity, liable to none of the objections here referred to, which deserves more attention than it has yet received in our places of education. Could we hope to find a considerable number of youths so happily constituted that the love of learning would prove a sufficient stimulus to diligent, persevering application, we should have discovered an incentive to action which the most scrupulous morality could not hesitate to approve. It is a delightful thought, that of an ingenuous young man led on through the schools, and through a studious life, by the strong attractions of

science, irrespective of any interested objects or of any reward, but such as reveal themselves to the understanding and the heart, in the discovery of those great laws which the inscrutable wisdom of God has impressed upon his creation. It is not conceivable that such a principle should interfere with the highest moral development, or that it should fail in leading to the most desirable mental culture. Indeed, it approaches both in purity and efficiency the Christian motive; and but for the too narrow field of its operations, we might be content to leave under its sole guidance all who will not be induced to learn the true philosophy of education from the great Teacher.

In attempting to show that the religion of Christ furnishes the student with the only safe and adequate motive to intellectual effort, I shall take it for granted that, so far as moral character is concerned, the truth of this proposition is conceded by all who hear me. Enlightened infidels do not hesitate to acknowledge the claims of the gospel as the highest, purest source, of

morals ; and none but rank, bitter enemies, now-a-days call this claim in question. In addressing myself to Christian young men who cheerfully recognize the excellence of Christianity, even while they may live in neglect of many of its precepts and privileges, I may safely presume that they acknowledge the Bible as the only sufficient standard of moral virtue ; and, therefore, the only safe guide in the formation of moral character. That the gospel also furnishes the only safe and sufficient motive and guide to intellectual culture, I shall now proceed to demonstrate. And here I shall claim nothing for religion on strictly religious and theological grounds. I shall only refer to it as a system of truth and duty exerting, and entitled to exert, a strong and permanent influence upon human conduct and character, from its natural and philosophical, no less than from its moral, relations to men. How, then, does Christianity bear upon the question of intellectual education, and minister incentives and aids to high mental improvement ?

1. *Its great law of* RESPONSIBILITY *fur-*

nishes a motive of great and ever-living efficacy.

Were it possible to lift up the veil which conceals from observation the secret springs of human action, it would be discovered that a deep conviction of accountability to God is the most pervading and powerful of these occult agencies. In the irreligious, this principle chiefly operates in the restraints which it imposes upon their bad dispositions; and to it we must chiefly refer the wide difference between the actual conduct and character of men, and that profounder depravity and overflowing profligacy which would prevail in the absence of all sense of moral and religious obligation. It is, however, upon pious minds that this principle operates with its fullest force. In them every act and enterprise is subordinated to this universal law. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" is the burden of every prayer. They "labor to be approved unto God;" and they are only satisfied with their own performances in proportion as all things have been done with a "single eye." They must

“eat and drink to the glory of God.” His claims to homage extend to every “word” and “act;” and they charge themselves to remember that they are to give account for all “the deeds done in the body.” Such a conviction of responsibility, in proportion as it is honestly entertained and obeyed, becomes the great law of life; and impresses with its potency, and tinges with its hues, every spring of action and every phase of character.

It will be admitted, I am sure, that this great Christian motive presses upon none with more urgency, or with an authority more imperative and sacred, than upon the young man led by his own inclinations, and allowed by providential circumstances to devote his early years to mental culture. He is engaged in elevating and purifying that part of his nature which constitutes him a man and a child of eternity—for which God manifests his care in all the arrangements of his grace, and for which Christ died on the cross. He is engaged in fitting for high uses the instrument by which alone he can honor God or enjoy him, or promote

the happiness of his fellow-creatures. If there is done on this earth a work of some importance and dignity, the culture of the immortal mind is such a work. To perform this work well, to make the most of these priceless opportunities, is obviously a sacred duty. The student occupies a high and holy trust. By diligence and fidelity in his work, he augments for ever his own powers of happiness and usefulness. He augments the means of happiness intrusted to him for human society. He augments his own capacity for knowing, enjoying, and honoring God. Shall it be thought a slight offense to prove false to such obligations? Shall the man who perverts influence, or squanders wealth, or violates a public trust, be deemed culpable, and is he innocent who robs himself, and society, and God, of talents put in his hands not to be buried or wasted, but to be improved to the utmost? Surely, if God will judge the world in righteousness, and with a rigorous impartiality demand his own, with usury, from every delinquent, the inquisition will press hard upon those who are accused of wasting the most pre-

cious of their Lord's goods—the immortal mind, made to appreciate his character and promote his glory. Upon every student rests this fearful responsibility; and every Christian student will recognize and respect it with a degree of solemn earnestness proportioned to his intelligence and piety. He will feel that “he is not his own”—that his talents and opportunities are only his to improve and employ conscientiously, and to account for in the last day. Under such convictions he can neither idle nor trifle. He will find in them a sleepless, faithful monitor, to rebuke away indolence and apathy; to whisper hope and heroism into his fainting spirit; to prescribe temperance in all things; to endow his hours with such a sanctity that it were sacrilege to waste them; to give law to his resting, his rising, and his recreation; to invoke his profounder respect for statutes and usages established for the maintenance of needful order, and for the protection against all intrusion of time consecrated to study. Such is the *natural* influence, and the *actual*, so far as conscience has fair play, which religion exerts

over intellectual improvement. I grieve to admit that not a few *nominally* Christian students are neither industrious nor law-abiding; though idle and disorderly are epithets as incongruous to their holy profession, as profane and intemperate. It is also saddening to the heart to observe the course of too many Christian young men, after they have passed the earlier stages of literary preparation. They cease to be students as soon as they are fairly launched upon the voyage of life. They are at the zenith of their intellectual greatness at thirty or thirty-five. A modicum of professional lore, a poor pittance of theology, a petty curriculum of pulpit preparation, is all they ever add to the measure of attainment with which they enter upon active life. Progress from henceforth there is none, except in the wrong direction. The starved intellect dwindles for want of fresh supplies of its natural aliment; imagination falters and grows dim, disgusted with its own worn-out imagery; discourse becomes flat and unprofitable, without freshness or point; and at fifty you have a man physically strong, but intellectually

exhausted, incapable of doing anything pleasant or profitable to God or man. Every such sad example implies gross recreancy to Christian obligations. Those who keep the commandment, "add to their virtue knowledge;" they "grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ;" and their intellectual pathway shines brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.*

2. Responsibility to God is the most powerful of all motives to intellectual exertion, and it operates upon every conscientious student with a force proportioned to his intelligence and piety. Religion supplies other influences auxiliary to this, which act upon and through some of the strongest principles of our mental and moral constitution. It is an incurable fault of lower motives that they operate unsteadily, and cease, for the most part, to exert any salutary, sufficient authority, at periods of life when the mind is yet vigorous and susceptible of large and rapid progress. Self-interest, as we have seen, soon contracts the intellect and hardens the heart—fatal checks upon progress,

* See Note B.

deadly foes to all excellence. Ambition puts its votaries upon other expedients than literary efforts for the attainment of success. Disappointment, too, and disgust, with which ambition must generally lay its account, impair and often destroy its efficiency, as a motive to intellectual activity, when the career of honorable enterprise has only commenced. Many a gallant spirit, urged on its course by these unchastened impulses, have we seen stranded and motionless amid the sad wreck of high hopes, long ere his sun had reached its meridian. Now it is the special advantage of the Christian motive, that it acts with a steady, and even increasing, force, to the end of life. No disappointment can chill its energy, for that flows forth upon the soul from inexhaustible perennial sources.

It is also a consideration full of the mightiest impulses, that intellectual growth and amelioration, like moral, are achieved for eternal duration. The labor requisite for acquisition and discipline, is lightened and sweetened by the reflection that it is to qualify an immortal spirit the better to perform its

functions; more perfectly to understand, and more keenly to enjoy, all that God shall reveal or enjoin through the long annals of an endless life. The mind does not die; and he who sends it onward upon its sublime career, enlarged and trained by wholesome discipline, and richly furnished with the knowledge of imperishable truths, "lays up treasure where neither moth nor rust corrupt." Nothing in religion or enlightened philosophy will justify the fear that the high intellectual attributes, with which the redeemed soul enters heaven, may not find worthy and significant employment there. The pious student, then, may exultingly write down for his motto, "I STUDY FOR ETERNITY;" and in so sublime a sentiment will he find unfailing encouragement to patient industry and persevering labor.

3. In nothing perhaps is the great superiority of the Christian, over all other motives, more manifest than in the uniform and powerful co-operation which it secures of the emotional with the intellectual forces of the mind. All work is briskly done when the heart is in it. Eminently true is this

of intellectual labor; and from the school-boy under the usher's rod, to the grave philosopher, those mental tasks which awaken a lively interest, and are performed with satisfaction, are easily and rapidly achieved. Whatever is attempted under the high sanctions of Christian obligation, possesses this advantage in an eminent degree. It is done to please God, and to glorify his name. It affords, therefore, to the pious spirit, an opportunity, ever eagerly embraced, for discharging a debt of gratitude, and offering testimonials of duty and loyalty. The heart at once warms to such an enterprise, and all the powers of the soul gladly co-operate in a work of an import so high. The Christian scholar is thus enabled to be always in earnest. His love and fidelity to God, and his gratitude to Christ, are concerned in the most effective discharge of this important class of duties, and his prayers and sacraments are not felt to be more obligatory upon him, than the functions of the study and the lecture-room. He learns to prosecute every science, and fulfill every scholastic engagement, under the supervision of

an all-seeing and never-sleeping Eye. How feeble and inconstant are all the motives which selfishness and ambition can furnish, in comparison with those which the love of God, and conscious amenability to him, are able to awaken in the pious heart! Let no one hastily conclude that this is a merely theoretical view of the subject, of no application to the matter in hand. On the contrary, it is a view applicable to every Christian scholar, and constitutes the actual motive of his conduct, in so far as he has any claim to the name of Christian. He studies as he would toil in any other sphere—as, called with a higher vocation, he would preach the gospel, or go upon a mission to the heathen—that he may glorify God in the performance of the duties providentially assigned him. They know little of the deep sentiments and holy aspirations of pious young men in our colleges, who doubt whether they pursue their self-denying career, and struggle with narrow means, and often with feeble health, under the lofty impulses which religion inspires. With very many of them, these, I am sure, constitute

the motive and the solace of their toils ; and I will not hesitate to avow that the example of such young men, toiling on for a series of years, amidst discouragements of many kinds, that they may by and by be qualified for usefulness in the Master's vineyard, has often proved most instructive and sustaining to me, and has admonished me to stand patiently and bravely in my lot, albeit ready to faint under the pressure of burdens disproportioned to my strength.

4. A similar augmentation of spiritual forces comes in upon the pious student from another quarter. Benevolence, and an ardent desire to do good to mankind, take the place of the narrow selfishness which, under less favorable conditions, constitutes the chief incentive to exertion. We know to what heights of self-sacrificing effort and virtue philanthropy has been able to elevate the great benefactors of mankind ; through what dangers, and over what obstacles, it has borne them onward to their angelic achievements. This ambition to mitigate the woes, and augment the happiness, of others, pours all its generous, powerful im-

pulses, into the bosom of many a pious student, and becomes the sleepless monitor of his waking, working hours. As the love of God enlists all the energies and stabilities of Christian principle on the side of earnest, persevering industry ; love to man awakens and presses into the same service all the strong sympathies of our humanity. These are confessedly the most powerful of all the agencies that go to influence the conduct, or modify the character, of men. They minister amazing energy to the mind. They rouse every dormant power into action. They arm the soul with preternatural efficiency. They make the mind inventive, vigilant, and daring. Faith, hope, and charity, have each their functions to fulfill in every department of Christian action, and nowhere else more than in the student's career ; but the greatest of these is charity—the most animating, the most powerful, the most enduring, of all the motives that minister earnestness and encouragement to the Christian student.

5. It will hardly be deemed a diversion from this strain of argument, to remark upon

the elevating, plastic influence, of prosecuting a protracted literary course at the forming period of life, under these lofty, pure, and disinterested motives. You cannot imagine any other course so well calculated to form large-minded, generous, upright men. Whoever makes the will of God, the rule and glory of God, and the welfare of men, the chief objects of his intellectual efforts, through a series of years, subjects his mind, as well as his heart, to a meliorating process of unparalleled efficacy. Nothing base, or degrading, or selfish, should be expected to survive such a course of discipline; and it would be difficult to conceive of any virtue fitted to adorn or strengthen the character, which should not find in it precisely the conditions most favorable to vigorous, ample development.

It is also material to remark, that such a scholastic career tends powerfully to supply the great desideratum in educated men—the harmony of the mind and the heart, the joint working of strong intellect and strong feeling—upon which all great mental efficiency and all true eloquence depend, and without

which the scholar can never hope to wield a great and permanent influence over the most precious interests of man and society. The arts of the rhetorician, however diligently plied, are all at fault here. Rules for managing the voice, or the eye, or the hands, and other physical auxiliaries to persuasion and oratory, can but kindle a cold, lusterless fire, which shall be as the crackling of thorns; while a well-endowed nature, diligently trained by education, and put in harmony with God and itself by religion, shall be able to pour forth, spontaneously, a tide of persuasive eloquence, whenever invoked by a worthy occasion. This, as is well known, is the perfect ideal held up by the rhetoricians to aspirants after forensic reputation; but it mostly escapes them that it is one of those priceless gifts which cannot be won by unsanctified labor, but, in a very important sense, cometh down from the Father of lights.

6. I will add, that education, prosecuted under the auspices of religion, enjoys a great facility, in the freedom of its subjects, from the low tastes, bad passions, and vi-

cious habits, which constitute chief obstacles to proficiency in learning. These are utterly incompatible with sincere piety, and cannot coexist with it; while any Christian profession, not wholly reckless of reputation and consistency, must avoid the grosser and more degrading forms of immorality. Every degree of religious principle and restraint, therefore, contributes a highly important influence toward the success of educational efforts; while deep and ardent piety, welcomed as the guide in literary pursuits, conducts to degrees of excellence and success, unattainable on lower principles.

My inferences from this protracted discussion must be few and brief.

1. Let every young man, especially let every educated young man, pause at the commencement of his career, till he thoroughly comprehends the importance of setting out with a proper theory of life. Let him "arise and shake himself." Let him spurn away from him, for one holy hour, the blandishments of ease and pleasure. Let him burst from the bondage of all unmanly,

unscholarly habits, like a brave, high-toned spirit, resolved to be his own master, and to rule himself well. He should ascend to some lofty mount of vision, some Pisgah, from whose summit the whole land "that remaineth to be possessed" shall be clearly visible to his earnest, honest gaze. Scorning to be hoodwinked and cheated by mere illusions, let him penetrate into the heart and reality of his whole destiny; doing impartial justice to the claims and dignity of the mind, as well as the body—of the distant and the future, no less than of the near and the present. With eternity and God before his eyes, and some reasonable, decent regard for his own well-being, let him come up to the great choice that, once for all, he must make for himself: "If the Lord be God, follow him; if Baal, then follow him." Let him remember that the principle which he adopts becomes henceforward a living, molding influence. It will enter and dwell in the depths of his nature—a well of water springing up and overflowing the soul, imparting to it, through the long ages of the future, its own properties and hues. Re-

member, young man, you are selecting a companion for the voyage of your entire existence, whose manners, habits, and sentiments, so close and long an intimacy will make your own. You are determining what meat your soul shall be nurtured upon; what shall be the complexion of your future being. In forming a library, you would have good, and not bad, silly, corrupting books. In choosing a teacher, or a place of education, you would avoid a driveler, and require the protection of discipline and good order. Your physician must not be a quack, nor a pretender. You are ambitious to give your adhesion to true and approved, not to antiquated and exploded, systems of philosophy. In choosing your principles of action, and subjecting your mind to influences which must form its character and control its destiny, you consent to receive into your bosom an agency more potent than books, or teachers, or schools; more efficient than the physician's most heroic remedies; more authoritative than all the sects of philosophers. You are thus called upon to assert the highest privilege,

and perform the highest function, of a free, redeemed, heaven-born spirit. Show that you are worthy of the sacred trust which God, in his providence, confers upon you—the office of taking care of yourself.

2. Having deliberately adopted a right principle of action, reverence and obey it. Make it the law of your life, from which no temptation, or interest, or accident, shall ever seduce you to swerve. It is an emanation from the divine Wisdom fallen upon you, as a lamp for your feet. It is the sum and highest expression of all genial philosophies. Come what will—*ruat coelum*, “though heaven and earth pass away”—resolve that no jot or tittle of this law shall be marred, or dishonored, or shorn of its authority. It shall be your charmed talisman, before which evil spirits will cry out in despair, or be smitten dumb with terror. It shall be your passport to excellence, and reputation, and power, and honest fame, at the presentation of which barred gates will open before you to all choice and precious things. A conscientious, early, and absolute surrender, of the life to the guidance of duty, brings into

the mind a power far more valuable than would be the acquisition of new faculties: it quadruples the efficiency of the old. It is better than genius or eloquence, and is often a good substitute for them. It simplifies all the movements of life. It cuts short a thousand struggles with temptation and passion. It is a thread of gold in the hands of inexperienced youth and care-worn manhood, to conduct the willing and obedient through the dark, pathless labyrinth, of this world. Ordinary capacity trained and operating under this influence, in the end, outshines and outstrips the best parts without it. Not a class graduates in this, or any other college, which cannot furnish living illustrations of this truth. So profound is my conviction on this point, that I do not hesitate to proclaim it as the true, infallible way to success. Granted a subject for our experiment, not mentally halt, or maimed, or blind, in the possession of merely common faculties; and a liberal education, prosecuted under the auspices of pure, high principles, shall make him every whit a man, fit for any profession or avocation to which

society calls her intelligent, cultivated sons. I must subjoin the additional remark, that nothing begets such utter despair of success in teaching, no matter what the mental capacity, as indifference to moral and conscientious obligations. There is really no hope for a young man who will not listen to the voice of duty. He has fallen a prey to a mortal disease, for which no human skill can provide a remedy. The voice of duty is the voice of God—an inborn, heaven-sent guide. Not to obey it is to revolt against our own constitution; it is as if one should refuse to give heed to the intimations of his senses; his eyes, his ears, or his touch—and will, as certainly, and by as dire a philosophical necessity, bring upon him hopeless, irretrievable misfortune. When this mental disease is once established, I could wish never to see its victim enter the doors of a college, or armed with education, to be no ordinary scourge to himself and society. Let such a one be consigned to some narrow sphere of laborious life, where there is least room to encounter temptation, or exert influence, and where an urgent demand

for strenuous, incessant toil, may counteract and subdue more harmful tendencies.

3. I shall conclude with a very simple practical direction. Always be ready to avow your principles of action. Scorn concealment. Put out your true colors to the gaze of men and angels. There is a false prudence, a mock modesty, which inculcates the opposite method. It discourages confession, as savoring of ostentation, and would have us leave the world to infer the existence of virtuous principle from our conduct. In most instances this is but a paltroon's expedient to avoid responsibility, and save a convenient position for treachery or evasion. It is well and safe to stand committed to the right, that the world may know, in advance, where you will be found in any day of trial; and it is a reflection upon a good man's intelligence or integrity, to have his opinions and principles for ever unsettled, or in doubt. Society has a right to know what it may expect from him; and justly suspects him of interested and dishonest aims, when he chooses to remain undecided and uncommitted till popular suffrage has announced

the safe way. Educated men are the natural sources and guides of popular opinion; and they are bound to stand forth boldly, to battle with prejudice and breast the inundation of passion, though at some risk of being swept away by its fury. The principles of the educated, active, influential men, of every community, generally become its public sentiment. This living embodiment and expression of reason, truth, and righteousness, acts upon the multitude with vastly more directness and efficiency than books of morals and religion; and as it constitutes the most effectual method for the formation and vigorous maintenance of a sound public sentiment, so it is chiefly relied upon for that function. On this account it was that the laws of Athens held that citizen an enemy to the state who remained a neutral in any important crisis or question of general interest. The Redeemer of the world has given to this equitable principle the sanction of religion, and it is only they who *confess* him before men, whom he will confess before the angels in heaven.

Let every one who would not become a mere puppet and time-server, beware of feeling more solicitude for promotion than he does for his principles. If they are to be put down, it is a misfortune and a snare to rise; and he should blush, and suspect himself a knave, who is conscious of grudging the sacrifice which it may cost him to be an honest man. No valuable ends, besides those of selfish or profligate ambition, can ever be secured by such dishonorable successes; and any but a weak or unscrupulous man will prefer to bide his time, and wait for more auspicious days, when God, whose attributes ever side with the right, will pluck its drowned honors from the deep, and make the conscientious and the brave sharers in its triumphs. Whoever covets promotion while his principles are under the ban, must fall back upon the expedients and resources of party, which is always framed and held together by compromises in which principle is sacrificed to policy. Into this turbid maelstrom, from which virtue and conscience never come forth without a stain, good, but am-

bitious men, of facile morality and feeble purposes, are ever ready to plunge.

As a good man is ever bound to manifest his principles in full view of the world; so should he, with a yet intenser solicitude, strive to keep them boldly and vividly expressed to his own mind. He should accustom himself to gaze upon them with profound, and even awful, respect. His soul should be pervaded by a deep abiding sense of their importance, their sanctity, and their authority. Both the understanding and the heart need maintain the most intimate and conscious connection with the pure, sacred springs, from which they derive their light and inspiration. In the great questions of humanity, morals, and religion, with which these latter days are rife, the Christian scholar should even hesitate to yield himself to the guidance of his most virtuous habits, or to the most deliberate and unsuspected of his by-gone conclusions, or to the conservative traditions which he may have imbibed from his converse with good books and wise men. In matters of slight import and perpetual recurrence,

these are sufficient safeguards against erroneous opinion or vicious action, but not in the great struggle for moral and social meliorations in which the educated men of this age are called to engage. He who would command the best resources for this high enterprise, must penetrate deeper than habit, or opinion, or authority. He must live in hourly contact, and conscious, loving communion, with the principles of truth, righteousness, and mercy, that are within him. He must draw from the deep sources of all moral and intellectual power, and require of every cause, which asks sympathy and co-operation, that it obtain afresh the approval of his reason and his conscience. His heart must beat, his bosom heave, and his eye flash, only at the bidding of the great, deep, holy principles, which his own strenuous efforts, and the grace of God, have imbedded in his nature to minister light to his soul, and vigor to his arm, and fire to his eloquence. In the dogmas of such a philosophy must the philanthropist and the Christian seek for strength. Here is the

inexhaustible source of the only species of power of which a good man may be innocently ambitious.

Your thoughts, young gentlemen, have all along outrun my speculations. From the first you anticipated my conclusions. Remote as was our starting-point; abstract and speculative as is our argument; we find ourselves conducted to the true source of wisdom and virtue. Behold, in the cross of Christ, the only sure guaranty for intellectual excellence and success! Does the student need a lofty, omnipotent, undying motive, to sustain him in his long struggle with labor, disappointment, and temptation; with the world's unfriendliness, and his own manifold infirmities? Such a motive he finds in the gospel, and nowhere else. Are noble sentiments, strong, deep sympathies, and pure, powerful feelings, indispensable agents in the highest intellectual performances? They are supplied in the principles and experiences of that religion which inculcates, as the sum of all righteousness, perfect devotion and perfect benevolence—that "we love the Lord our

God with all the heart, and our neighbor as ourselves." Are the tastes to be elevated, the appetites subdued, and the passions controlled, in order to secure to the mind's operations freedom from all impediments and distracting influences? This miracle, too, the gospel can accomplish. It is profitable for all things. "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," are its legitimate fruits. "They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts." They are endowed with "whatsoever things are honest, and lovely, and of good report."

I have brought you to the cross, my friends, and I leave you there. O be content to receive your illumination from this, the great central light of the universe! Hence—if you will cultivate the loftiest ambition, and secure the best attainments—hence draw your inspiration. Hither come for power and for joy; hither bring all your honors and successes, and consecrate them "to Him who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

Write the name of Christ upon your banner ; exalt the cross high above all idols :
“ *In hoc signo vinces.*” Be

“ Siloa’s brook, that flow’d
Fast by the oracles of God,”

your Castalia.

To such good auspices it is my privilege once more affectionately to commend you ; and may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you, now and ever. Amen.

A P P E N D I X .

NOTE A.—Page 20.

THE literary fraternities, of late so greatly multiplied in our colleges, exert a very important influence upon the formation of both mental and moral character. They have gradually introduced into these institutions a new element, very worthy of attention, whether considered in connection with the maintenance of sound discipline and good order, or with literary improvement. Twenty years ago the students of a college usually formed two associations, for the purpose of mutual improvement in composition and oratory. Two hours in some afternoon or evening of each week were set apart by the authority, or with the consent of the faculty, for these exercises; which were conducted sometimes secretly, but more commonly with some degree of publicity, under such rules and

regulations as were agreed upon for the orderly transaction of business. These societies, though liable to abuses, often contributed in a considerable degree to the improvement of the student. Some skill and facility in extemporaneous speaking were acquired—for which the ordinary routine of college life affords less favorable opportunities. A spirit of inquiry and emulation was awakened; information was elicited; the timid were encouraged to take part in exercises prescribed with their consent, and presided over by their associates; and the general freedom and wide scope, as well as the method, of the discussion, were calculated to introduce into the scholastic arena something of the earnestness and reality of the actual business of life, for which it constituted, to some extent, a useful preparation. The drawbacks upon these benefits were often party spirit, rivalries, jealousies, and suspicions; a loose and vapid style of speaking and writing, contracted in the absence of proper instruction and judicious criticism; and sometimes an undervaluing of the pre-

scribed studies and duties which constitute the student's proper business.

In addition to the two or three associations, which usually embraced the whole body of students, we now have from five or six to a dozen secret societies, aiming at similar objects with the old fraternities, and securing them in various degrees. Some special benefits are probably gained by this minute subdivision, in the closer intimacies and by the freer play of confidence and sympathy which it allows.

Of the *disadvantages* which may grow out of this innovation I only speak theoretically, as the excellent tone of moral sentiment which has usually prevailed in the Wesleyan University is calculated to counteract any unfavorable tendencies in the casual associations of the students. The additional expenditure of money and time is a practical and obvious objection of considerable weight, though slight in comparison with any injurious influences on mental and moral culture which may possibly result from the cause under consideration. The inconsiderable numbers of

which these societies, now so greatly multiplied, must consist, would seem to be less favorable to improvement than larger associations, from lack of stimulus, and the want of an audience; from the narrow sphere of comparison; and from the little variety of talent and attainment presented, whether to awaken emulation or to supply models. It is an easy achievement to shine and win applause in a circle of half a dozen students drawn together, it may be, by the common bond of mediocrity in mind and scholarship; while intellectual exhibitions in the presence of fifty or a hundred intelligent young men, have another sort of ordeal to pass. In the larger association we should always expect some examples of fine taste, sound reasoning, and good speaking, well calculated to awaken and guide a manly ambition to excel. The closer intimacy, and stronger ties, of the smaller fraternities, must also tend to impair the strength, or prevent the existence of the *esprit du corps* of the class and the institution, which constitutes one of the most delightful, enduring, and valuable, satisfactions and reminiscences

of college life. It will be found, I think, except under the most favorable circumstances, that the multiplication of these fraternities tends to excite groundless suspicions; to alienate friends, and prevent the formation of friendships between congenial minds. Even religious ties and sympathies are not always able to resist an influence which may sometimes degrade literary associations into the bigotry, selfishness, and pettiness of a clique. In a state of morals and sentiments less favorable than that with which I have the good fortune to be most conversant, the unreasonable and eager strife of small associations might produce great difficulties in the government of a literary institution. I am, however, bound in justice to add, that no such evils have fallen under my notice; and that instances have come to my knowledge in which the right feeling and self-respect of the fraternity have rendered valuable aid to the cause of good order, and done much to restrain an erring member from indolence, vice, and dishonor.

Not to make any further use of the

foregoing suggestions, they should inspire the student with great caution in his selection among the various societies which invite him to their fellowship on his entrance upon college life. He should, at least, take time to consider, and become acquainted. He should be cautious that he does not commit the keeping of his comfort, his scholarship, his principles, his manners and morals, to associates whose bond of union may be their community of idle habits, vulgar tastes, and conversation; of low scholarship, and loose or irreligious principles; and a common aversion to certain laborious studies and duties prescribed in the college course. The societies themselves ought to be ever on their guard against the dangers and abuses to which, however outweighed by advantages, they are unavoidably exposed; to maintain a spirit of generous, honorable, not of petty, suspicious rivalry, toward their confraternities. They should watch over the conduct of their members with brotherly kindness and solicitude, and seek to promote in them scholarly, gentlemanly, and manly,

habits and aspirations. It should ever be a first principle with them to prosecute their laudable objects in strict subordination to their higher duties as members of a public institution, and in a frank and ingenuous, and honorable spirit, toward its administration and government. Even those slight infractions of law and order which may be deemed venial in an inexperienced individual, ought to be esteemed disgraceful in a society of intelligent young gentlemen, which is presumed to be animated and guided by the combined discretion, and honor, and conscience, of all its members. Associations of students, judiciously conducted, in accordance with the principles here suggested—devoting themselves, not to trivial, but to significant, earnest, manly discussions and inquiries; always kept in harmony with the higher duties and objects of college life; and, I will add, never allowed to interfere with due attention to the public societies, or to introduce into them any of the petty rivalries of the minor fraternities—may become very useful aids to intellectual culture.

NOTE B.—Page 39.

THE limits of a single discourse would only allow a passing allusion to the subject of this paragraph ; though its intrinsic importance might well claim a far more extended consideration. The evil referred to is the besetting sin of educated men in the United States ; which, so far as I have enjoyed opportunities of observation, gives them a bad distinction in comparison with those of other countries. With regard to the great body of our graduates it may be affirmed, without qualification, that they make no advancement in classical and scientific knowledge after leaving college. The two or three years usually devoted to professional studies, carry forward the work of mental discipline with some good effect ; but, upon their entrance into active life, three-fourths of our scholars bid a final adieu to both literature and science, as if these were only fit for school-boys, and of no further use for mental culture, for graceful accomplishment or elegant recreation.

We have an increasing, though still a very small, class of professionally literary men—authors, editors, philosophers, &c.—who make letters and science their business. We may add to these, the professors and teachers in our leading educational establishments; and now and then a clergyman or physician, chiefly of the younger class: the residue of our liberally educated men not only make no advancement in scholastic attainments, but are actually retrograding to a point where a page of Tacitus, or a proposition in Euclid, becomes to them the profoundest of mysteries. Even in professional learning, little progress is usually made beyond the demand of an imperative necessity; and it is only in the hands of a few that medicine, law, or theology, becomes a really liberal profession. It seems doubtful whether any decided improvement will very soon be achieved. Growth in civilization, and the keener competition and more minute and better-defined division of labor, which must result from a dense population, and the prevalence of a higher general intelli-

gence, will gradually create and *enforce* a demand for better literary qualifications. Meantime, the strong inducements to active business life—the temptations of trade, of speculation, and other methods of money-making—will continue to seduce our educated men to desert or neglect their proper sphere. Above all, the bottomless pit of politics will still swallow up its hecatombs of noble victims. For all this there is really no remedy in our present state of society; and it only remains for our literary institutions to use all diligence in repairing the waste. More than ever is it incumbent upon them to elevate the standard of education, and furnish our rising scholars with the greatest practicable amount of good cultivation; since it is quite certain, with regard to the most of them, that they will cease from all literary improvement as soon as they become their own teachers.

So far as these strictures are applicable to Christian scholars, the evil *ought* to find its cure in their conscientiousness, and their zeal to obtain the highest qualifications for

usefulness. To these moral influences are we indebted for a majority of the examples of literary industry and excellence that still exist among us. A considerable number of clergymen, especially, retain their habits of careful study and mental activity to advanced age. It must be confessed, however, that, as a class, they are far from guiltless of the shortcomings on which we have ventured to comment.

There is one form of this grievous error to which an interesting class of our graduates are specially exposed, and which merits, on that account, a passing notice. I refer to preachers and candidates for the ministry, of whom our graduating classes annually furnish the church with an increasing number. A large majority of these become *itinerant* ministers, a peculiarity in their mode of life which is liable to exert a special influence upon intellectual character. The frequent *changes* involved in this system of ministerial labor, though by no means incompatible with the highest intellectual attainments, and confessedly very favorable to a zealous and

effective discharge of the most important ministerial duties, offer to those who are willing to fall into such a snare, some peculiar temptations to intellectual sloth. The custom of writing sermons, or *skeletons* of sermons, has become much more common than it was among the fathers of the denomination; and all, or nearly all, of our ministers preserve in manuscript such ample minutes of the plan, topics, and arguments, of their pulpit exhibitions, as may serve for future use. The propriety of such a course is unquestionable; and our objections are only directed against the grievous, ruinous abuses, to which it is perverted. After some time spent in the ministry, a studious man finds himself in possession of a good supply of prepared discourses, sufficient, in all probability, to meet the demands of a circuit or station for the one or two years which our plan allows him to spend with the same congregation. By a judicious intermingling of these old sermons with others prepared from week to week, and adapted to the special exigencies of the work, a conscientious, industrious

man, secures invaluable time, not only for pastoral duties, but for such mental culture and new acquisitions as shall insure a constant growth in wisdom, influence, and usefulness, from youth to old age. To those who know how to improve it, our itinerant ministry offers, in this respect, a special advantage over a more permanent settlement; and some of our preachers eagerly avail themselves of its facility. Upon not a few promising young men, however, this peculiarity of our system operates not only disadvantageously, but fatally. When their stock of sermons, or *plans*, has accumulated, so far as to answer current demands upon it, they make no more, and cease to be students. There is an end to all improvement; and they stagger on to premature mental decrepitude under the burden of these some four or five hundred stale, antiquated sermons. In not a few instances, the victims of this stupendous offense against the human understanding, and the claims of God upon his ministers, reach their climacteric at thirty years of age; after which they neither

study nor think, unless we are to dignify as intellectual efforts the half hour devoted, from week to week, to conning over the well-remembered, venerable manuscript. Every one in the least acquainted with the powers and laws of the mind is able to comprehend the stupendous folly of these men. The human intellect gains expansion, and vigor, and acuteness, by activity. *It must work*, or dwindle and starve. It must THINK—think habitually, earnestly, consecutively—or it will, ere long, lose its power of thinking. The perusal and reperusal of yellow manuscripts is not study. The recollection and repetition of old sermons is not *thinking*. The mind must do something—must invent something fresh—must work and wrestle with new problems and deep propositions, in order to give hardness and vigor to its own sinews. The hand that wields the hammer, or plies the graving tool, constantly gains strength and skill; but suspended in a sling, it will not be long in forgetting its cunning. The Hindoo devotee who has been stationary ever since he learned to stand on one

foot, has also lost the power of locomotion.

Our objection is not to the quality of the old sermons. They may be very good, and theoretically very well adapted to the existing wants of the hearer. It is possible they are even better than the preacher may now be able to produce. All this may very likely be true, and yet they may be useless to the people, and discreditable to the preacher : while very inferior discourses, fresh from the mint of the soul, and blazing with the fervors of an excited, laboring mind, will awaken profound emotion in the hearer's, as well as the preacher's, heart. Old sermons are preached with good effect by men who are still in the habit of making new ones, and who keep their intellects thoroughly awake by study and invention. They then receive a new endowment of life and power, a new assimilation to the pious spirit, by passing through such an intense resuscitating medium. Without this fresh, vivifying baptism, these repetitions are, irrespective of their intrinsic quality, the stalest and most unsavory of human performances.

They remind us of the desiccated preparations of the botanist, which are quite bereft of all their fragrance, and grace, and charming colors, though one might not be prepared to deny that they still retain a measure of latent medicinal virtue. It may be laid down as a first principle, that he cannot long continue a useful, nor even a popular, preacher, who has ceased to be a student. He must himself gradually lose all relish for the dry, irksome work of memory and repetition, to which he dooms himself. However habit or temperament may enable him to preach with apparent warmth and vivacity, his announcements of truth do in fact no longer bear the sanction and indorsement of his own deep, living convictions; for neither reason, nor conscience, nor faith, are much concerned in the reproduction. If this sort of work is distasteful to the preacher, it soon becomes loathsome to the hearer, with whom all such exhibitions pass for mere routine or declamation. A clerical brother lately said to me, "I know several preachers in the —— Conference, who have not *studied* in ten or twenty years."

Such ministers are only less guilty than those who have not *prayed* in ten years ; for it is quite as practicable to be a good preacher of the gospel without praying, as without studying. No minister can maintain a respectable position, and satisfy the wants of an intelligent congregation, who is not a diligent student. No matter if he has a cart-load of prepared sermons, and they as good as ever Paul preached, he must bring out "things new," as well as old, if he would make his ministrations either profitable or acceptable to the people. *At least half* of the sermons called for by the exigencies of ministerial labor should be produced by current efforts. To say nothing of doing good to others, the study and preparation of one sermon a week is no more than is requisite for the best nurture of mental and moral life. The greatest boon that could befall many preachers, would be the conflagration of their old store of manuscripts. Anything that should induce or compel them to return to studious habits, were better than the mental inactivity which dooms so many good men to actual inefficiency and super-

annuation, at a time of life when experience and hoarded wisdom should qualify them for the most extended usefulness, and the most salutary, effective popularity. Self-educated men are not less—it may be they are even more—exposed to this deadly sin, than the graduates of our colleges. If the latter often mortify their friends, and bring reproach upon the cause of education, by their indolence, and consequent miserable, petty mediocrity; the former, with no less frequency, disappoint the favorable hopes awakened by their early proficiency, and fall back, from a position won by manly efforts, and full alike of honor and of promise, to a grade of performances and aspirations false to all the traditions and anticipations to which such auspicious beginnings had given rise in the church.

No subject connected with our itinerant ministry, and with the great interests providentially intrusted to it, is more worthy of deep, solemn consideration, than that so imperfectly discussed in this note. That the evil referred to is not rare among us, every observing man knows full well. That it

must, to whatever extent it prevails, impair the efficiency, the respectability, and the moral integrity of our ministry, is too painfully obvious to require proof or argument. The church had need to watch vigilantly against this great delinquency. Our ministers, both in open conference and in their private intercourse, are wont to exercise over each other a supervision comprehensive and searching, beyond anything known among other denominations. Something might possibly be done, in this way, to mitigate a great, if not a growing, evil. But the remedy chiefly to be relied on, rests with individual conscience, with our young ministers especially, whose mental habits are not yet formed, or if formed, not yet perverted. It is for them to determine whether, with the increasing advantages of education, of many and cheap books, and of more leisure for study, our ministry shall *grow* in grace and *knowledge*; whether our revered itinerancy shall continue to show itself adapted to the increasing intelligence and refinement of the age. That this, and much more, is practicable, we do most devoutly believe;

but the full success of the great experiment demands a great increase of knowledge and intellectual accomplishments among our clergy. Nothing less will do. Nothing less can sustain us where we are, or prevent decline and deterioration. Ardent, self-sacrificing piety, is a qualification always presupposed in a minister of Christ, about which there is no need that anything should be said in this connection, further than to insist upon that particular manifestation of it which leads to thorough, systematic, various, *protracted* study. For this nothing can be taken as a substitute. True, "it is better to save souls than to study." The effect is more excellent than the cause; but it cannot exist independent of its cause: and nothing is more idle than the common plea of much preaching, or much pastoral visiting, as an apology for little study, and poor, stale sermons. Preaching, effectual, good preaching, is what the gospel relies on for success, and this, without diligent study, is an *impossibility*. Whoever attempts to divorce what God has joined together, will be sufficiently rebuked by an unblessed, uncomfort-

able, unwelcome ministry. He may be popular, and even useful, in the heyday of youth, when personal advantages—sweet tones, glossy ringlets, flowing sympathies—and still more, good hopes generously cherished by the church, and not yet blasted, plead in his favor: but some higher demands await his maturer years. Gray hairs must come crowned with superior wisdom and piety, if they will conciliate reverence and affection; and he alone who does not despair of remaining always young, is excusable for omitting to provide betimes for the exigencies of a period which will sternly require the fulfillment of all early promises.

THE END.

RESOURCES AND DUTIES
OF
CHRISTIAN YOUNG MEN.

A DISCOURSE TO THE
GRADUATING CLASS OF WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY,
AUGUST, 1845.

BY STEPHEN OLIN, D. D.

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PREFACE.

THE following discourse is published at the request of the class of young gentlemen for whose benefit it was delivered, and to them it is now affectionately inscribed.

I have esteemed it a misfortune that my personal intercourse with the students of the university has been so frequently interrupted since my official relation to them commenced, and that I have hitherto enjoyed fewer opportunities than I had confidently and reasonably expected for the inculcation, whether in the pulpit or the lecture room, of such Christian lessons as, from time to time, might seem adapted to their circumstances and wants. The improving condition of the affairs of the institution will, I trust, hereafter leave me at liberty to devote a larger portion of my efforts to the more appropriate duties of my station. In the mean time, I gladly avail myself of the present occasion to place in the hands of my young friends, as well those who are still under my watchcare as those who have gone forth into the

busy world, my exhortation and advice in regard to several topics in which they are likely to feel a lively and increasing interest.

I suppose educated young men to be peculiarly liable to the false reasonings and seductive influences which it is the object of the following pages to counteract and expose : but I have miscalculated the evil tendencies of the times, if the admonitions of this discourse are not found applicable to a far larger class of our youth. To this most interesting portion of the Christian community these unpretending suggestions are here presented, with my earnest prayers that God's blessing may attend and make them, in some degree, subservient to the promotion of an earnest and stable piety.

RESOURCES AND DUTIES

OF

CHRISTIAN YOUNG MEN.

“Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.”

ROMANS XIII, 14.

THIS text is highly figurative, but its intention and import are very obvious. It is an exhortation to be evangelically and thoroughly religious. The first eleven chapters of the Epistle to the Romans are devoted to the exposition and inculcation of Christian doctrines. The twelfth and thirteenth are hortatory and preceptive. They announce our practical duties, and warn of dangers to be shunned. They declare, with authority and without any reserve at all, that we are held, under the gospel dispensation, to the highest style of virtue, both in the motive and in the performance. As far as concerns the principle

of our movements in the new life, "love is the fulfilling of the law," while in point of fact and actual manifestation, believers are called upon to "present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is their reasonable service," to "prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." Our text announces the true method of attaining these vital Christian objects in reference both to the motive and the manifestation: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof."

There is a numerous and very interesting class of persons entitled to our respect by their intelligence and moral worth, and appealing strongly to our sympathies by the false and highly critical position which they occupy. They are undoubting believers in the Christian religion, and warm, avowed admirers of its sublime theology, pure ethics, and divine philanthropy. Yet they are not Christians. They are destitute not only of the hopes, but also of the

helps, of the gospel. Something of its morals they contrive to exemplify. Some chill, half-extinguished rays from the Sun of righteousness are allowed to blend with their philosophy, and give coloring to their maxims of life ; but as a religious system, claiming the profoundest homage, and the most unreserved obedience—they only contemplate it from afar, and sedulously shun all personal contact and near communion with it. As a religious system, that is to say, as to all the ends for which God has made this great revelation to the world, the gospel is to these men but a nullity, and, for all practical results, all one as a lie. The moral attitude of these believers, who yet refuse to be Christians, is painfully anomalous as well as grossly at variance with all right reason and the manifest fitness of things, just in proportion as their convictions are clear, and their faith satisfactory. Speculate upon it as a mere phenomenon apart from all evil consequences ;—what a spectacle of absurd folly and self-degradation is it for a rational being to live in habitual contempt of the

sure teachings of his own reason and experience; or for a moral being to live in perpetual conflict with his conscience? What should we think of a man of mature age and unimpaired vision, who should deliberately walk into a flood, or into a conflagration? What should we think of a community skilled in the laws and liabilities of our earthly being, which should condemn all the promises of seed time and harvest, and blindly and bravely advance to meet the inevitable famine? What but that chance or Heaven had smitten them with madness, the dire precursor of impending destruction! Yet the infatuation we are now seeking to expose is greater and worse than this, in the same degree that eternal things are more important than temporal. What right has a man, I do not speak of him now as a creature of God, and responsible at his tribunal, but as a man accountable to himself, and bound to maintain some degree of self-respect as well as to make some provision for his own welfare, present and prospective,—*what right* has he to trifle with his own

destiny, and to perpetrate such enormities as the shutting of his ears and his eyes against the words and the manifestations of the divine mercy toward him? He is a being with strong passions, which need to be chastened and controlled—of powerful tendencies downward as well as upward, which call for checks—of immortal aspirations, which struggle for their sphere and their proper satisfactions. These unfelt, undying wants, for which the gospel alone has made adequate provision, are so many voices rising up out of the bosom of our human nature, to rebuke and shame the believing impenitent out of his stupendous folly and more stupendous guilt.

It is to be remembered that the gospel is a voluntary system, under which no one becomes virtuous or pious without seeking to become so. It is under this condition that it appeals to our moral susceptibilities; and not to yield obedience to the call, is both to leave this part of our nature without development and training, and to inflict upon it positive violence. Religion too has its times and seasons. The dews

of its grace are specially adapted to tender plants and fresh opening flowers, and are less congenial and less effectual when the growth is more advanced, and the root has struck deeper into the hard, arid soil of this world. Religion has its special lessons for youth, which cannot be learned, or if learned, are no longer of much practical importance in maturer life. It seeks to lay its molding hand upon young, unsophisticated minds, that it may bring out fine specimens of redeemed humanity for God's glory and for heavenly bliss. It does not, and it cannot, change the leopard's spots. Repetition and reiteration have given to these simple statements the character and authority of proverbs, and, I am sorry to say, the infirmity of trite maxims; yet are they the suggestions of the highest philosophy, and the most venerable experience, and they are so many arguments in favor not only of becoming pious, but of doing so at the right time.

Religion, to be genuine and effective, must be ostensible and avowed. Let no one hope to work out his salvation, or to

secure any, even the smallest of the spiritual advantages which the gospel offers, by stealth. God, and our own moral nature, call for open, manly confession, and both will assuredly disown and denounce all pretensions to piety which shun exposure to the broad light of the day. Nothing can be effectually done in this work till the sincere aspirant after Christian excellence fairly assumes his position, and becomes, as he is intended to be, “a spectacle to men and to angels”—“a city set on a hill that cannot be hid.” We not only have lessons to learn for our own improvement, but lessons to exemplify for the improvement of others and for the Saviour’s honor. They only who run lawfully win the prize, and none others are likely to receive the precious aids indispensable to success. This we might expect from all we know of ourselves or of God’s attributes, and of this we are notified in his word. Till a man assumes an avowed and recognized Christian position, he has no full scope for the exercise of his own proper resources, and no adequate occa-

sions for calling up his powers. The state of indecision and divided aspirations which precedes the final and formal decision of this great question, is little better than a paralysis of the soul. There is seldom any distinct vision, and never any earnest, well-directed purpose or action, until this moral crisis is passed. But with the assumption of his true Christian position, at the moment of "putting on the Lord Jesus Christ;" not on religious, supernatural grounds alone, but on philosophical also, the man receives an investiture of high powers and immunities. It is an important point gained to have it known to which party we belong. The sight of the banner that floats over our heads will not fail of clearing away many annoyances and many enemies, and of bringing to our aid troops of powerful auxiliaries. The courage of the soldier rises with the putting on of his uniform, and still more at sight of the marshaled hosts that throng the outspread field.

The responsibilities of a Christian profession, so often feared and shunned as

intolerable burdens, under the pressure of which we are likely to make a disgraceful fall, ought rather to be invited as safeguards and helps in the working out of our salvation. We are likely to walk circumspectly as in the day, when conscious that the expectant eyes of friends as well as foes are upon us. The pious Æneas had a double motive for flying from the burning city when he bore his aged father upon his shoulders, and led his infant son by the hand.

The pursuits, too, in which religion employs us, have a direct and powerful tendency to expand and invigorate the virtues to which they give exercise. We begin feebly and faintly—it may be almost reluctantly. With infinite difficulty we drag ourselves away from the world, but more encouragements and fresh resources rise up in our path, and we speedily find that Christ has counter and stronger attractions. His grace, ever the sole dependence of the humble Christian, operates at first but feebly; beseeching, wooing, drawing us to be reconciled to God. It comes,

however, to exert an influence more and more decided. It animates, it encourages, it impels, it constrains us. We are borne onward by it as on the bosom of a great deep. Its prevalence becomes at length a domination, and the willing captive, bound but unconscious of his chains, loses, in the deep feelings of the devotion of his heart, all sense of his moral agency, which gives way to a law of love—to a sort of predestination by the affections. Religion is no longer a drudgery, but a delight; and he who could at first do nothing as it ought to be done, is enabled to do all things through Christ.

At the same time that the resources of him who has fairly “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” are thus constantly and rapidly augmenting, the positive obstacles in the way of success gradually but surely diminish both in number and magnitude. In the first place, the evil passions and the devil can find little for one to do who is fully employed by the Saviour. Then bad habits, a great hinderance at first, grow weaker by disuse

and neglect. Better tastes, too, are cultivated; so that what were seductive pleasures, and so powerful temptations once, lose their character and become an offense. Walking by faith, the Christian appreciates more and more completely the excellence of the heavenly objects with which he is thus made familiar, and so acquires a standard of comparison which he can but be ever applying to the worldly objects and enjoyments that invite his regards. Such a process cannot fail to wean him from perishable good, and so leave him more free from every weight.

While this Christian process strengthens perpetually the motives and the aids to piety, and abates the force of opposition, it has a yet stronger tendency to improve the *quality* of our virtues. Nothing is more likely to retard and discourage a generous mind, intent on the attainment of the highest excellence, than a perpetual consciousness, or even suspicion, that its best performances are marred by the admixture of some base alloy; that some low, selfish motive may have been active,

though unperceived, in the production of its most shining deeds. We may acquire humility or modesty from worldly disappointments and mortifications, but some measure of misanthropy and discontent are likely to be derived from the same lessons. It is not always easy to practice beneficence and charity, to exert the highest public, or social, or private virtues, without having, whether we will or not, some reference to the returns which we are likely to receive in the form of gratitude, or reputation, or public confidence, or posthumous fame. This selfishness, to whatever extent it mingles with our motives, not only produces a sense of self-degradation, but it is, in fact, degrading to our performances and character; and so largely does this debasing alloy enter into our spirit and conduct, and so utterly impossible is it to exclude it altogether, without some more potent exorcism than mere human virtue can summon to its assistance, that most men, after some vain struggles against its occult, malignant influence, yield to its dominion, and become satisfied

with doing their duty, without much concern about the motive. Under such circumstances it is but too obvious that virtue has nothing left besides its form and its name. It has no longer any power to purify, etherealize, and exalt our nature. It is a mere earthly thing, a matter of business, a balancing of interests and conveniences, a skillful and comprehensive solution of the question, How can we take the best care of ourselves? I am quite sure that many will find, in their own consciousness and recollections, manifold illustrations of the evil I have exposed. Now he who has "put on the Lord Jesus Christ," has found a perfect antidote for this evil. He has become a disciple, that he may be saved; and he devotes his entire life to Christ, who was crucified for him, as a matter of gratitude and pious obligation. "Love is the perfecting of the law," and this is a motive from which self is wholly excluded. We work, we suffer, we live for another, even for Him who died for us, and rose again. When we have fully "put on Christ," then is love made

perfect, and all fear and all selfishness is fully "cast out." Disenthralled from all low, personal ends, and seeking only how we may please Christ, we enter upon a high, holy career of virtue, which can never know the taint of worldly maxims, which finds its model, its resources, and its ends, in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Gratitude, love, loyalty, these are the motives by which all heaven is swayed. They impel the angels onward in their career, and yet more the "spirits of just men made perfect." Indeed, heavenly pursuits, and enjoyments, and virtues, are no other than those into which the good man is introduced when he "puts on Christ,"—the remote and invisible parts of the orbit in which he has already begun to move.

As the Christian motive is the only one which can be trusted for purity, so it is the only one that can be relied on for efficiency. "Love is stronger than death." A man will often do for the love of his friend, or his family, what he could not do on any lower impulse. But if affection for kindred, according to the flesh, is able

to minister strong impulses to the spirit, the love of Christ "*constrains* us." It imparts an energy something more than human, and qualifies for achievements only less than divine. A man's performances are likely to bear some proportion to the strength of the motives on which he acts. Now the great Christian motive, love to Christ, partakes of the superhuman and the godlike. It has the additional advantage of stability. It cannot be impaired by time, or change, or circumstance, but attains dominion over the soul, potent in exact proportion to our progress in piety. The racer moves more swiftly as he approaches the goal. A body tending to the earth, gains speed in its descent. So the Christian is borne on with an ever accumulating momentum as he draws nearer to perfection in faith and love. When we add that Christ has provided divine assistance for all exigencies to which our human resources are unequal; that he gives the Holy Spirit to help our infirmities—to assure our hopes, illuminate our minds, and purify our hearts—I am unable to per-

ceive what is yet wanting to a most admirable and all-sufficient apparatus of motives and means for the attainment of the highest moral excellence, and to the most glorious consummation of all that our fallen, but redeemed nature can aspire to.

I have already intimated—indeed, the text directly affirms, and this is its burden—that these great facilities for the prosecution of our moral improvement are suspended on the one condition of a sincere and hearty adoption of the gospel. We are “to put on the Lord Jesus Christ.” He must become to us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption—must be teacher, and priest, and only potentate. We must wear his livery, must go our warfare at his charges, and under his banner. Our dignity, our defense, and our exceeding great reward, must be sought and found in him. But we are not only called upon to make this entire dedication to Christ; we are also cautioned against all reservations: “Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.” Faith

in Christ, and a resort to the gospel for pardon, and purity, and eternal life, presuppose an unconditional submission to its terms. Not one successful step can be taken in religion previously to the settlement of this grand preliminary. The mind may not be able at the outset to take in all the particulars involved in this great act of submission, but it can and does embrace them implicitly; and it is of the very essence of all right faith to confide in Christ to the uttermost, and to consent to follow him whithersoever he goeth, giving to the winds all anxiety about the special paths in which we may be called to proceed in our onward march to heaven. Christ's dignity and sovereignty are concerned in imposing such conditions as he pleases, and in receiving no terms at the hand of the sinner; and he will unquestionably use his disciples in just such services, and impose upon them just such burdens, as he sees best, giving no pledges in advance, but the assurance that his grace shall be sufficient for them. I know well that a multitude, even of professing

Christians, begin and prosecute what is called a religious course, on a very different plan. They give law to religion. They retain as many indulgences, and concede as many sacrifices, as may fall in with their tastes. They make provision for pride, and ambition, and sensuality, and self-will, and "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" only in so far as they think he may set off their own purple and fine linen to the best advantage. But my business to-day is with the sincere, who wish to be made holy and to be saved by Christ, and who really desire to know the conditions of success. I take it upon me to warn all such to beware of admitting *any worldly, or selfish motive, or consideration whatever*, into the settlement of this great question between God and their souls. I take it upon me to proclaim that all such tampering in the business of religion will certainly prove fatal to any well-founded hopes of success in the Christian career. Whoever stops to inquire whether it may cost him sacrifices to be a Christian, with any intention to hesitate if it does, has admitted a

consideration utterly incompatible with his becoming a Christian at all. Whoever chooses his creed or his church with any, the slightest, reference to the honor, or the ease, or the emolument, it may give or withhold, does, by such an admission, utterly vitiate all his claim to have any part or lot in the matter of saving piety. I do not speak of those who knowingly and deliberately make these their chief grounds of preference; but I affirm that it is wholly antichristian, and an insult to the crucified Saviour, to yield any, the smallest, place to worldly motives in choosing the Christian position which we will occupy. Let Christ and conscience decide in this matter. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." The gospel will admit of no compromise here. This is its point of honor, which it cannot, and will not, yield by a single iota. I feel called upon to use the language of unmeasured denunciation against a mistake, so often fatal to hopeful beginnings in religion; so very often fatal to the religious prospects of young men.

I deem this point of sufficient importance to receive more particular and detailed illustration.

Without stopping here to consider the grosser forms which this grave offense against the Saviour's dignity familiarly assumes, I will only refer to such as are most likely to be found in cultivated, aspiring minds. A demand is often put forth in this quarter for more tasteful developments of Christianity than we are wont to meet with in its every-day history. Accustomed to look for the beautiful and the poetical in their speculations as well as in external objects, persons of this class can conceive of nothing higher or nobler in the gospel than its adaptations to minister to this universal want of cultivated, polished society; and they have little true respect, and less sympathy, for any manifestation of piety which does not conform to their special tastes. They have a theory on the subject, which requires that the divine Author of all the beauty and harmony of the material world, as well as the

world of intellect, should, for still higher reasons, observe the same great principles in his plans and operations for bringing men to heaven. I have stated the substance of the theory, which is, however, variously modified by habit, education, and temperament. And I remark that this demand upon the gospel quite loses sight of the fact, that the salvation of souls is its grand design and object, to which mental and social improvement are only incidental and secondary; that Christianity finds the world immersed in darkness, and vice, and depravity; so that its great work on earth is that of elaboration, of renovation, of preparation, for a higher estate of mature graces and perfect harmonies. It has, of necessity, a great deal of rough work to do; its processes must be adapted to the material to be acted on, no less than to the results to be produced. The symphonies divine that charm the angels are not so well fitted to this sinful world, which has contrived to array its tempers, and tastes, and tendencies, against its Maker, in a hostility far more brutish than angelic.

The means and appliances of the gospel, in order to be effective, must recognize the conditions and the disabilities of the beings over whom its conquests are to be won; and whoever would be an effective co-worker with God in this broad field, must, like God, be content to accommodate his message and ministry to the multitude. Let no man who has raised himself to the great purpose of living for his race and for eternity, indulge in the idle fancy that he can gain his chosen end by herding with the philosophers, and propounding Christianity to the multitude in learned theses. Let him rather come down from the high places of intellectual pride, and put himself in communication with the masses. These are not yet polished, or intelligent, or able to appreciate all that in heaven will be familiar as household words. In the most favorable state of society which has ever existed on the earth, the multitude of men have been uneducated—have been doomed to toil, and to comparative poverty. To this condition of our race the gospel at first adapted its lessons and its

agencies, it may be, from choice, but assuredly from necessity—a necessity that still exists in all its force. I may add, that the demand for more tasteful or philosophical developments of Christianity can only be satisfied at the expense of the immensely important class of men for whose special benefit the Christian revelation was promulgated—for “the gospel was preached to the poor.” The reform proposed might accommodate the tenth of a tithe of the population of highly civilized nations; but its natural tendency would be to separate this favored class from the masses, and bring them under a Christian culture, the most intellectual and graceful it may be, but wholly inapplicable to the condition and wants of the people. These, forsaken by their natural guides, their candlesticks removed from their midst, must sink into hopeless impiety and ignorance but for God’s mercy, which is wont to interpose, and raise up prophets from among themselves.

But this divine interference for the prevention of results, utterly and eternally ruin-

ous, does not adequately provide against some of the most deplorable evils that mar the piety, and fetter the energies, of the church. The gospel is a leveler, and contemplates our whole sinful race as "made of one blood." It will have "the rich and the poor meet together" at the feet of Jesus, and forget all earthly distinctions in rapt meditation on the infinite goodness and glory of God, and on the heavenly world, to which they both look by faith, as to a common inheritance. It will have the lettered and the untaught, the high-born and the low, mingle before a common altar, and bow down before a common Saviour. It abhors caste, and is ambitious of bringing together in one vast brotherhood of faith, and feeling, and co-operation, all blood-bought souls. It will have the rich contribute their wealth, the noble their influence, the learned their wisdom, the poor their sterling virtues, their patient toil, their might of sympathy and of sinew, to the building up of a pure and powerful church. It is by the combination of all classes, and all talents, that human society

prosper most, and, for aught that appears, it is the Saviour's design to constitute and edify the church upon the same principle. Now the pride of man comes in to thwart this benevolent design. It will have an aristocracy, where Heaven can, least of all, tolerate it. It puts asunder what God has joined together. As far as the antichristian theory, against which I so earnestly protest, is carried out in practice, it monopolizes and covers up the light. It sequesters talent and influence but to place them in positions where they act not at all, or at the greatest disadvantage, upon the general interests of religion and humanity.

Nor must I pass over, as too unimportant to deserve notice, the inevitable tendency of this religious exclusiveness to generate a spirit and a power antagonist to the universal equality guarantied by our free institutions. We have no privileged orders, nor is it likely, in the existing temper of the public mind, that talent, or wealth, or ancestry, or even great virtues, will ever give to their possessors a social

position dangerous to the rights of the humblest citizen; but I must think the lovers of our republican institutions and manners will have some cause for solicitude, if the growing tendency among our influential classes to desert the popular walks of religion, for more select and pretending connections, shall increase in a similar ratio for twenty or fifty years to come. The danger is not at all diminished by Christian forms and names; and a religious aristocracy which is completely sheltered under the guaranties of universal freedom of conscience, secured to all by our free institutions, has no security to give in return to those institutions, that it will not at least generate a spirit dangerous to their purity and perpetuity. No pride is more blinding and corrupting than spiritual pride, and men who are ever fancying themselves upon a lofty eminence, unconsciously acquire a habit of looking *down* upon the rest of the world.*

A question of far deeper import is this: What are the more strictly religious effects

* See Note A, at the end.

of this defection from the popular Christianity upon the persons most concerned? How is it with the dainty seceders who loathe the manna that "covers the face of the wilderness," of which "every man may gather according to his eating," and deem it distasteful to receive with the multitude, seated on the ground, the bread which Jesus so liberally blesses and breaks? Of all who lightly turn away from the lowlier faith of their early education and their fathers' house, to rear their showy altars upon the high places of the land, whether seduced by vanity, or ambition, or fastidiousness, it may well be doubted if many secure more than the shadow of true religion. If they have borne with them to this false, exposed position, some measure of spirituality, the growth of a more fruitful soil, and of a more benignant clime, it speedily withers and decays for want of a participation in those popular sympathies, from which they start back with a disgust so profound. Their dwelling places are unquestionably on the Parnassus or the Olympus of the Christian world, but these mountain tops have

neither depth of earth, nor springs of water, and no plant of righteousness is likely to strike its roots into the hard rock that composes their shining but arid summits.

Such aristocratic aspirants after a graceful piety, (I call them aristocratic for want of a better term to mark this perverse development of Christianity,) naturally fall into two classes, and exhibit two great corruptions of the gospel. The more intellectual and philosophical part commonly wander into that cold region of unfruitful speculations, where rationalism or transcendentalism, or whatever neology happens to be in fashion, claims empire. The merely fashionable, and ambitious, and fastidious portion, more usually pay their courtly homage to graceful forms or venerable reminiscences, and find and exhibit, at least, some of the semblances of spiritual piety in the religion of the imagination.*

I cannot part with the topic under consideration without bestowing a passing thought upon the God-dishonoring senti-

* See Note B, at the end.

ments in which this deplorable fallacy has its origin. This demand for a Christianity more refined and tasteful than that of Christ, proceeds upon the assumption that God is specially pleased and honored by the conversion of persons of literary taste, and polished manners; of men accustomed to good society, and well read in good authors. Disguise it as we will, that is the fundamental idea of this antichristian theory. Now, for aught that appears, these accomplishments do not figure very largely in Heaven's estimate of man. I cannot help suspecting that John Bunyan, John Nelson, and worthies of this class, wore, in God's sight, the insignia of a truer and higher nobility, than the choicest spirits of the brilliant eras of Elizabeth and Anne.

What are the attributes most prized and most sought for in man, by the crucified Saviour? Charity and purity. These are the cardinal virtues of the gospel. Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. God is love, and he that dwelleth in

love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. The entire law is fulfilled by him who loves God with all the heart, and his neighbor as himself. This is glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will to men. The gospel is satisfied when this great end is achieved, and it labors, from age to age, to implant this law of universal affinity and brotherhood in all hearts, and thus to establish a vast system of order and divine harmony, worthy of the wisdom and of the mercy of God. And this is its primary, proper object. High intellectual culture, advanced civilization, refinement of sentiments and of manners, do indeed attend, or rather follow, its progress, but only as incidental results of the great moral changes which have their sphere in the moral nature and character of man. The moral transformation is all that the gospel, as such, aims to accomplish. This makes the sinner a child of God, fits him for heavenly society and pursuits, makes him a joint heir with Christ. These are no doubtful announcements, but first principles of the gospel, which no sane Chris-

tian will for a moment call in question; and they suggest the irresistible conclusion, that that is the most Christian church, and that the most apostolic ministry, which most successfully accomplish these most Christian ends. No matter who they are that are converted, and sanctified, and brought to heaven. The ignorant, the outcast, the Hottentot, the slave—these are Christ's well-beloved brethren, and with him heirs of God. The princes of this world may be glad to go to heaven, if they may, in such company, and angels would exult to be co-workers with God in preaching the gospel to the poor. What lesson of instruction do I find in this digression? A stern rebuke of that wretched fastidiousness which refuses to be satisfied with such a type of Christianity as satisfies Christ—demonstrative proof that this reiterated demand for a more tasteful and philosophical religion is unreasonable and unphilosophical, as well as unchristian—new force in the exhortation, “Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.” Would you find for yourselves a religion adapted

to the soul's pressing wants, and to the demands of a perishing world? Drink deeply of the Christian sentiments and sympathies of the people. Would you act a heroic part in the holy war which God and good men are carrying on against error and sin? Throw yourselves into the midst of the masses, where there are most hearts to be won, and most souls to be saved. Do not be for ever gazing at the toy that glitters on the top of the steeple, but bend your regards upon the living stones that compose Christ's holy temple, upon the undying souls that throng its inner and outer courts. There the true altar and the authorized priest are sure to be found, and there God has work to do for all, who, like his well-beloved Son, are content to abase themselves, that they may be exalted.

I have not left time for the discussion of some other topics which I cannot wholly overlook. Educated young men often find another stumbling block in the presumed or dreaded interference of an honest consecration to Christ with their ambitious, and, as they are prone to esteem them,

their pure and honorable aspirations. My own observations on this subject would lead me to regard this as one of the most common and fatal causes of backsliding, as well as procrastination. Many, who hear and recognize the voice of God, refuse to enter his vineyard, because they are not quite sure that the employments and immunities to be assigned them there will be agreeable and satisfactory. Impiety never assumes a more daring attitude than this, however the rank offense may be disguised or concealed by circumstances or by false reasonings. What is implied by the postponement or abandonment of a religious course on such grounds? Distrust in God is implied, and unbelief in its most odious, atrocious, insolent form. Has God, then, no *right* to interfere with our plans? This mental discipline, and these accomplishments, which are too good to be subjected to his control—were they acquired—are they held, on terms altogether independent of Jehovah? Is the inexperienced youth, fresh from the schools and proverbially ignorant of the world, and of the

future, somewhat better qualified to choose his own way, and thread the labyrinth of life alone, than God is to guide him? You will not be a Christian, because that confessedly assigns you a sphere of action where God and conscience must be consulted. You seek a freer range and a wider sphere. Take them, and then inquire if you are beyond the domain of God. Are you really freer to choose or surer to win? Is responsibility excluded, or danger of disappointment and disaster? No; for God reigns everywhere. All that is gained by this daring revolt against his authority is the dire privilege of working out our destiny without any promise of guidance, or grace, or reward, yet always under the divine supervision and control—always in conflict with his revealed will—always obnoxious to his displeasure, and certain of ultimate ruin whatever fortunes may be conceded to a career which is, at best, only a prolonged rebellion against God.

After saying so much of the religious aspects of this case, I must not omit to expose the shallow views of life on which

this great practical error is based. As a class, truly pious men are the most fortunate in the world. Estimate their successes by honors won, by their usefulness, by their attainments, or by their enjoyments, and these persons greatly outstrip their competitors. I will not stop to inquire why it is so, though I doubt not there is in the thing both a divine providence and a divine philosophy. Heaven guides and cheers on the man who is content to receive his commission from above, while the virtues and safeguards of religion do naturally minister to his successes even in secular pursuits. The fact, however, is all I contend for here. Common experience is a demonstration that godliness is profitable for this life, as well as that to come. It is something more than impiety—it is gross, blind folly, for a young man, setting out in life, to guard against the disturbing influence of religion in the settlement of his plans. God is likely to be his wisest counselor, and his most powerful auxiliary, and to exalt him in proportion to the humility of his submission to the divine authority.

I must add another remark. It is unquestionably true that piety often promotes, while it seldom retards, a man's progress in the world. It is no less so, and no less proper to mark the fact, that men who seek to make of religious pretensions, and church relations, instruments of ambition or gain, are almost sure of meeting with signal disappointment. Success in such attempts would offer a dangerous temptation to human virtue, and fill the churches with hypocrites; but success in such attempts, in such a country as this, where the government is neutral, and all sects have fair play, is nearly impossible. Aristocracy in religion meets with a potent antagonist in the legal and social democracy that universally prevails. Proscription for religious opinions is nearly impracticable in any form, where there is a multitude of sects, and the weak are prone to unite against any encroachment by the strong. In such a state of things there is an open field for industry and merit, in which no sectarian badge can win or lose the prize. There is no reward for the hypocrisy which

would profess, or the base cowardice, or heartless prudence, which would shun to profess, any opinion or bear any name, for selfish objects. The temptation to sin in this matter is really so weak that there is little need of providing any safeguard against it, beyond a statement such as has been made. Neither cupidity nor vanity has much to gain by "making provision for the flesh," when neither emolument nor influence are to be won by recreancy to principle.

The short-sighted ambition which covets higher and brighter spheres of effort and manifestation than comport with the claims of duty, or the arrangements of Providence, is wont to fall into another capital error. In paying to circumstances their vain court for facilities and rewards, seldom granted but as the fruit of patient labor and practical self-denial, these impatient aspirants after distinction are insensibly led away from the only theatre of action adapted to their character and attainments. Talent is ever best developed, and commonly best rewarded, where it is most wanted.

It should therefore respect the great laws of demand and supply; and while the wide earth and boundless sea are open to its enterprise, should never press too eagerly into petty, glutted marts. An educated Christian young man, who, in all the attainable good before him, has eyes to see something better and nobler than mere pecuniary gain, cannot fail to perceive a most hopeful field of usefulness in his connection with one of the great popular Christian denominations of this country. It is unavoidable, that among the vast multitudes, so rapidly gathered into these broad folds by primitive zeal and labors, many will lack culture, and intelligence, and refinement. Education and literature, polished eloquence, and profound learning, naturally follow, though they seldom precede, the greatest successes of young and rising sects. When such wants are most pressing, precisely then is there likely to exist the most urgent demand for such qualifications to satisfy them.

A religious community whose successes have outstripped all its anticipations, sud-

denly finds itself responsible for the intellectual, as well as moral, improvement of millions. It has reached a point in its history where a demand for cultivated talent is of the most urgent character. It must have educated men; and literary attainment, when united with piety and good sense, is sure to be placed in positions the most favorable for the efficient exertion of extensive and salutary influence. It almost necessarily happens that learning, and eloquence, and refinement, acquire a consideration and a power to do good, great in proportion to their scarcity, and to the multitude of demands upon such qualifications. Just such a theatre as enlightened, sanctified ambition should most desire, is here opened to the Christian youth. It proffers useful, congenial, and honorable employment. It insures the earliest, fullest development of his mental and moral resources. It promises all reasonable and desirable exemption from the tedious probation and discouraging competition which he may be doomed to encounter elsewhere. It offers him equal and honorable partnership

in the holy work of training a host of immortal beings for usefulness, purity, happiness, and heaven. The folly of turning away from these outspread fields waving with golden harvests, and echoing all around with Macedonian cries for more laborers, is only less than the guilt which is always superadded, when, in addition to this contempt for the suggestions of a sound discretion, some violence is also inflicted upon the conscience. And here I cannot refrain from a passing remark on the benignant relations which religion ever sustains to the practical movements of business and of life. So nicely and so graciously is the great scheme of an overruling, watchful providence, adapted to our various circumstances, that the most inexperienced youth—the merest novice in affairs—has little more to do, than simply to obey the dictates of an enlightened conscience, in order to secure all the advantages of the most comprehensive and well-digested plans, and of the deepest insight into the future. An unwavering trust in God and his word is the best guide, as well as

the best safeguard. It is a great simplifier of life's complicated pursuits, and endows each single-hearted follower of Jesus Christ with a precocious, heavenly wisdom.

In anything I have said, I do not mean to intimate that both our actual piety and our Christian profession may not involve the most serious consequences. I know too well the genius of the gospel, to inculcate a doctrine so foreign from its avowals and its spirit. Great sufferings and great sacrifices do, unquestionably, enter into God's entire scheme for diffusing and propagating the true religion, and for the moral discipline of individuals. Christ was made perfect by suffering, and through much tribulation we are called to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Afflictions work out for the saints an exceeding weight of glory. Not only are Christians subject to the common lot of mortals, which is usually one of many pains and sorrows, but they are often called to suffer for Christ's sake. It is fundamental to the Christian system that men were redeemed by suffering, and hardly less so, as far as history is our teacher,

that the best achievements of the gospel are to be carried in the midst of peril, and loss, and agony. In this great work of toil and sacrifice, it is no doubt the will of God that young men, and educated young men, shall have a principal share. God chooses them because they are strong, and he intends to make them the chief of his instruments for the accomplishment of his great designs of mercy. Let them look their calling fairly in the face, and enter on the career of duty, well aware of the conditions upon which they serve a crucified Redeemer. None more need to stir up the gift that is within them, to gird about their loins, and put on the armor of righteousness. I may safely say that no policy is so dangerous as caution and cowardice. I may confidently warn them of the folly and danger of "making provision for the flesh," by refraining from such a dedication as may exact from them the sternest conditions known to our Christian vocation. If great results can be attained by great efforts and great sufferings, what generous heart will refuse the sacrifice? If our own holiness

and the happiness of others may be promoted in proportion to the expenditure of toil, or talent, or wealth, who will not feel that the outlay is reasonable and even politic? But the argument likely to be most effectual with ingenuous and truly pious minds is derived from the genius of our religion. The gospel is a way of salvation by grace. It lays the Christian under obligations immeasurably strong, which he can never satisfy, while it awakens in him a sense of gratitude ever restless and studious of methods by which it may testify its loyalty, and crown with honor the great Benefactor, who is too high to be repaid for all his mercies. This deep, undying sentiment of the pious soul, finds utterance in thanksgiving and adoration—in prayer for the extension of the kingdom of Christ, and in all the ways by which a sincere Christian makes manifestation of his piety. But the unwasted, struggling impulse gains strength by all its activities, and longs for new modes of exercise and development. Dissatisfied with the little it can do for the glory of the Saviour, it would gladly give

its testimony by suffering. This feeling is natural; and it is strong in every bosom in proportion as piety is profound and intense. It has led many misguided Christians to devote themselves to penances and voluntary inflictions. It led the apostles to rejoice "that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ." Paul avowed a desire to endure martyrdom for the satisfaction of this profound sentiment, and many early Christians joyfully submitted to the severest tortures as a testimony of their devotion and gratitude to Christ. Not many in these days of peace and toleration are likely to be called to pass through such an ordeal; but if the spirit to suffer the loss of all things for Christ's sake be not still with us, then has the true glory of the church perished with her martyrs. Doubtless this spirit yet lives, and would be made manifest by fitting occasions. Doubtless there are multitudes who would encounter losses of all sorts—privations, labors, and even death itself—for the crucified Redeemer. They remember his words, that if any love father, or

mother, or brother, or sister, or houses, or lands, more than him, he cannot be a disciple. They remember that it is often more prudent to lose the life than to save it. Many even feel that they have a baptism to be baptized with, and are straitened till they perform it. They are eager to live, and, if needs be, to die for Christ. They have "put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and made no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." Their cry is, "Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth." They are not careful to make conditions. Wheresoever God's Spirit or providence will lead, they stand ready to go; neither do they call anything their own which they possess, whether of talent, learning, position, wealth, or influence; but regard themselves only as stewards of the manifold grace of God, and servants to the church for Christ's sake. These are Christians such as Christ came down from heaven to raise up. They are the messengers of his mercy—ministers of grace. Their hearts throb in unison with Christ—their ears are open to every Macedonian cry. The church, this coun-

try, the age, and state of the world, want such Christians, and only want enough such, speedily to cover the earth with righteousness.

I have no higher wish on behalf of the young men whom I now address, than to see them thoroughly imbued with the spirit of such a religion as I have attempted to exhibit. Put on, my friends, put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof. I may claim to feel the profoundest interest in your welfare, but I am not afraid to trust you to the guidance of such auspices. Go forth clad in these robes of purity and beauty, protected by this impenetrable armor of righteousness, and none who love you will have anything to fear or to desire beyond. Christ will guide you aright. Precisely into such positions as are best suited to your talents, and most adapted to usefulness, will he be sure to lead you. And this is the only way for attaining at once the highest happiness and the most perfect development of the intellectual and moral powers. Here you are sure of hav-

ing "grace sufficient for you," and that is the only sure pledge and hope for eminent success. Here alone you secure that harmony and co-operation of the moral with the mental forces; that concurrence of the emotions with the intellect, indispensable to the fullest development, and the highest achievements, of a human being.

I shall close by making of the exhortation in the text a special application to those who hear me. I am too intimate with the liabilities and the actual history of young men, not to be aware that many of them act in direct opposition to the lessons inculcated in this discourse. They deliberately "*put off* the Lord Jesus Christ," and that for the very purpose of making provision for satisfying the lusts of the flesh. They have found unexpected difficulties in the way of a religious life on their first entrance upon the scenes of public education. The buoyancy and the levity of youth, the confluence of a multitude of petty temptations, small but eager rivalries, new demands upon time, and a new arrangement of their hours, the *esprit*

du corps which too often operates to an extent incompatible with an easy discharge of the highest moral duties; these, and many more nameless evils, often combine to test whatever integrity and strength of religious principle and habit the inexperienced youth may have brought from more quiet scenes to the threshold of college life. A brief season of trial, a manly bearing in the face of danger, an honest recurrence to first principles—more than all, humble reliance upon God, and a conscientious observance of the duties of religion, would soon overcome difficulties which are only formidable from their novelty and their number. At this precise point not a few who come among us, with the fairest promise, abandon their religion. Some do it with apparent deliberation, and at once; others gradually, and, it may be, insensibly, but none the less effectually and fatally. A vague purpose is commonly cherished of resuming it again under more favorable auspices, when temptations shall be fewer or weaker, and better helps available. But for the present they put off

Christ, and get their education and form their character without him seeming to regard themselves more free than before to indulge in doubtful pleasures and associations, and still more to omit the distinctive duties and manifestations of a Christian profession. If conscience at first interpose some obstacles in the way of such a defection, it soon accommodates itself with a vicious facility to the cherished inclinations of the heart. I have often seen a hopefully pious youth thus throw away his armor in the day of battle, putting off Christ just when he most needs to put him on—entering on a career of many dangers without religion, just because he thinks it will be difficult or unpleasant to get along with religion. He thus fairly uncovers his bosom to the envenomed shaft. He invites, yea, compels God to forsake him, and then rushes, blind and naked, into the midst of his foes. I speak, young gentlemen, of an experience not unknown among you; not to reproach, but to warn. Some may have gone so far in this downward career, and have

drunken so deeply of the cup of cursing which they have chosen, that the voice of affectionate admonition will be lost upon them. Not so, I trust, with others who hear me. The agony is not yet over with them. Shamefully have they slighted, deeply have they grieved, the Saviour; but their hearts yet beat quickly and sorrowfully when they look upon Him whom they have pierced. You who have made a trial of this style in religion, say, Is it satisfactory? Does it shield you in the day of peril? The enjoyments, the lusts of the flesh, for which you have provided at such enormous expense, are they, upon the whole, better than the peace of God and the love of Christ which you have lost? If you look back with desire and self-reproach, then you have still a taste and a conscience for better things, and may, I trust will, rally and struggle to regain the position you have rashly abandoned.

Those who are about to leave this arena of preparation to enter upon new scenes of life, and engage in fresh enterprises, I

beseech to listen to the instructions of this occasion. Do not venture to take a step into this dark, troublesome world, now opening before you, without a divine guide. You I may exhort with special emphasis, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." Fear to move in the grave matter of choosing your profession, and forming the more permanent plans and relations of life, before you assume your proper religious position, and are thus enabled to act under divine direction. You may not neglect this duty without incurring the entire forfeiture of God's promises and grace. Let me inquire of you, with an earnestness and solemnity befitting the importance of the interests involved, whether you have hitherto been true to your convictions of duty, whether your plans of life have thus far been formed prayerfully and conscientiously, in the best moods of your religious feelings, when you most fully appreciated Christ's supreme claims? Are there not in your bosoms half-stifled convictions, slumber-

ing recollections of unpaid vows made under circumstances of deepest solemnity? Look over these archives of conscience with heedful deliberation. Resolutions, formed when your bosoms glowed with zeal and love for Christ, are most likely to be the wisest and the best. Bring yourselves back to the same moral attitude, and review these high, holy purposes, under the same clear manifestations that led to their formation, or you are likely to sin against your own souls irretrievably. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ," and then choose your way under his divine auspices. See to it that you make no provision for the flesh in this deeply interesting crisis of your endless being. For God's sake do not blunder here. Remember you choose for eternity, and that an error at this point must give a wrong direction to all your future career. You determine what you will do for Christ, and for men, and for your own souls. Choose honestly; choose bravely; fearing no labors, or crosses, or sufferings. Better far than honors or crowns are the sacrifices

which fidelity to Christ shall impose upon you.

There is among our educated Christian young men a grievous offense, so common as to have become a sign of the times, and so full of evil tendencies as to call loudly for exposure and denunciation. I refer to the levity with which so many treat their early vows of consecration to the Christian ministry. Under convictions of duty and of a heavenly calling, always deeply felt and gratefully recognized in seasons of high religious enjoyment and spiritual devotion, they begin or prosecute their literary career as a preparatory training for the sacred office. With seasons of depression or declension come doubts, and reluctance, and dissatisfaction, with plans of life which really present few alluring aspects to the lukewarm, worldly-minded Christian. Such occasions are often chosen for testing the validity of the call to a work involving many sacrifices, and for which high spirituality and entire consecration to Christ are, confessedly, indispensable qualifications. It is then no difficult task to

discover deficiencies which the least sensitive conscience must feel, and which there is even a strong temptation to magnify as the means of obtaining a release from obligations hitherto deemed sacred and inviolable. I have briefly indicated the process by which many of our Christian students, designated for the ministry by the most unequivocal marks of a divine vocation, contrive to stifle their own convictions, and elude the sacred claims of the church and of the crucified Saviour. I can truly affirm that no other instances of religious defection and recreancy to sacred duties are wont to fill me with a sorrow so profound and inconsolable. I habitually look upon pious students with the deepest interest, as in a peculiar sense the property of Christ, not only as the purchase of his blood and the trophies of grace, but as the probable and fit instruments to be chosen for the enlargement of his kingdom. It is to be expected that many, so providentially prepared by literary training, should be divinely called to the ministry of reconciliation; and it is matter of unfeigned

thankfulness, but none of surprise, that so large a proportion of converted students become deeply impressed with the duty of devoting themselves to this great work. Few, I believe, who maintain a devotional, cross-bearing spirit, ever fall into serious or lasting doubts about the authenticity of their heavenly calling. They may be permitted to pass through seasons of trial and self-examination for the establishment of their faith and for the attainment of a higher moral preparation for the exigences of their holy vocation; but few sincere souls, I am persuaded, will ever be left to discard, as the result of fancy or of enthusiasm, these awful impressions of the highest duty. They who have been seduced by ambition, or indolence, or unbelief, or self-indulgence, from the higher walks of piety, do, indeed, bring upon themselves a moral state to which distrust, and distaste, and absolute repugnance, in regard to their proper mission, are natural and unavoidable. They are no longer fit to be ministers of Christ; but this does not annul their call nor its binding obligations. The bur-

den rests upon them none the less because the strength to bear it is gone. They have clearly fallen into the snare of the devil, and there is only one way of escape. They must revert to first principles, or be irretrievably ruined. They must return to their first love—must revisit the sunny regions of divine grace and manifestation, where clear convictions and holy aspirations domineer over the soul—where love, and faith, and joy in the Holy Ghost impart strength to sustain and light to guide. There is really no other alternative besides such a spiritual revival, for any who lack the nerve, to conclude that they can get along, in life and in death, without a Saviour. To keep this an open question, with some latent floating purpose, to take advantage of a day of feeble impulses and dim manifestation for sliding away into a secular profession, is to impose upon the mind and the heart an intolerable burden, the ominous pledge of comfortless progress, and of ultimate, shameful discomfiture. The interests of both worlds are equally concerned in such a choice of

occupation as shall leave the conscience free to approve, and God free to patronize. To those who are rather timid than rebellious, and have still a stronger desire to win the crown than dread of bearing the cross, it may be right to point out the vast resources placed at their disposal, and of which they receive the investiture on assuming their true position; but it must, after all, be admitted to be the mark of a degraded moral tone for a Christian man to manifest much anxiety for anything beyond the doing of his duty. It has been well said that events belong to God; and it may be added, that we are likely to be made happier, as well as better and abler men, by every encounter with difficulties and every blast of adversity. These are God's chosen methods of discipline, and his appointed conditions of all eminent success. So true is this, even in common life, that we do not hesitate to pronounce the most unfavorable auguries of an educated young man, who, in his plans of life, makes an over-careful provision for self-indulgence and an exemption from severe toils and

trials. If he will not push from the shore till he has taken pledges for a smooth sea and a favorable breeze—if he must, at all events, have sumptuous fare, and fine linen, and houses of cedar, he insists on conditions which neither Heaven nor earth will grant, and which are wholly incompatible with the performance of great actions, or the formation of great characters. In religion, this timid, selfish spirit, to whatever extent it may exist, is subversive of the best principles of the gospel. It is utterly incompatible with faith, and in itself a mortal sin. We may not inquire too anxiously what Christ will demand of us in return for the blood he has shed and the heaven he has prepared for us; but we know he will have nothing less than entire consecration; and that we are to be ever ready “not only to be bound, but also to die, for the name of the Lord Jesus.” It is precisely at this point of entire self-renunciation that the soul becomes endowed with the power of an endless life, and can do all things, through Christ. If this is an excellent attainment, usually reserved

for advanced piety and matured graces, it may, nevertheless, become the starting point of every Christian young man. Let him put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, and he obtains the mastery over all resources, human and divine, needful to the fulfillment of a glorious destiny.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A.—PAGE 30.

I SHALL have been greatly misunderstood if it is inferred from the statements and reasonings of this discourse, that I entertain uncharitable views, or would call in question the sincere piety and Christian virtues of the religious denominations of this country. My single object is, to expose a practical and most pernicious error, which is perpetually forced upon my attention by my position, and by some acquaintance with the present condition of the American church. It is no reflection upon the conscientious and devout members of any Christian sect to intimate that persons, attracted to its communion, or its ministry, by other than strictly religious considerations, are not very likely to become eminent for Christian attainments or usefulness. It is well understood, that such

proselytes are frequently admitted into their new relations with a degree of distrust and caution, of which no conjecture could be formed from the eclat which is given to their conversions by a sectarian press. In that particular branch of the church which numerically profits most by the tendency I have exposed, a conviction is evidently gaining ground, that it is better policy, upon the whole, to train up its own ministry than to open so wide a door to recruits from the seminaries and pulpits of other denominations. Moderate men are becoming startled at the vaulting speed with which the neophyte so generally hastens to embrace the most extreme opinions and policy known to his new sphere of speculation and activity; while, to considerate men of all parties, it must be obvious, that however a deep, hereditary reverence for imposing forms, and high, exclusive claims, may be compatible with humble, evangelical piety in persons trained, from their childhood, under such influences, there may, at least, be some danger to the unstable, giddy mind of the

novice, who, without any such safeguards, is suddenly brought in contact with ideas, to him so new and so magnificent.

I hope I shall not be thought to bestow upon this topic a measure of attention greater than its intrinsic importance. As a practical question, its importance is every day increasing in this country, and the time may not be far away when it will force itself upon the consideration of all thoughtful minds. As a mere sectarian question, it may well enough be regarded as trivial; for it is of little consequence to the enlightened Christian whether the losing party suffer more by mortification than the winning gains by the enjoyment of a petty triumph. There are considerations, however, of far deeper import both to the individual seceder and to the cause of our common Christianity. These easy transitions from the church in which we were reared, or into which we have been providentially led to enter, on our conversion, to another, however pure or orthodox, can hardly ever be effected without injury to the cause of Christ; and I must think

them almost never innocent, unless when they are prompted by strictly conscientious motives. It would generally be better to submit to great inconveniences, and even to tolerate slight errors in doctrine or discipline, rather than resort to a remedy so violent and dangerous. To the individual himself it is likely to prove a very hazardous experiment to forsake the hereditary, or the chosen, communion for another. He deprives himself of advantages not to be expected from new religious associations, however pure and elevating. Ties, which religion sanctifies and strengthens for itself, are weakened or broken asunder. The genial sympathies of domestic piety are chilled; the unquestioned authority of hereditary faith is shaken, and all the nameless influences that guard and help a youth, seeking and serving God in the midst of his kindred, and under the approving and watchful eyes of the good men with whose faces and names are associated his hallowed recollections and impressions of the Lord's house, are all utterly lost. I will not affirm that such

evils uniformly result from such defections, nor that they are, in all cases, of sufficient force to interfere fatally with the successful prosecution of a religious life. It is no exaggeration, however, to say that they are not of rare occurrence, and that they are wont to exert a very pernicious influence on personal piety.

Evils, of a still graver character than any that befall the individual, are likely to follow such recreancy. In proportion to his position and influence does he inflict upon the church and the general interests of religion the greatest calamity; not chiefly by withdrawing his talents and resources from their appropriate sphere of usefulness, but by grieving pious souls—by awakening distrust of his own sincerity, and resentment for his recreancy, and by provoking uncharitableness, jealousy, sectarianism, and evil-speaking, in multitudes of professing Christians. I have usually been led to doubt whether an influential layman or a minister can ever reasonably expect to do as much good, in any new church relations, as he unavoidably does harm

by violating the old. It should be kept in view in estimating the probable effects of such changes, that a man never carries with him into his new field of action more than a small portion of the influence, and other means of usefulness, which he had acquired by faithful services and an upright walk. Of these he is destined to make, at least, a partial forfeiture by the transition, and years must probably elapse before he can regain the vantage ground which he has so lightly abandoned. Suspected, or denounced, by those whom he deserts, he must pass a long probation ere he wins the confidence of his new associates.

Upon the irreligious world the effect of such instability is yet more observable and pernicious. It leads to a distrust of all pretensions to piety, and goes far to confirm the too prevalent suspicion, that when educated or influential men become religious, they have commonly some selfish end to subserve. What gives additional force to such suspicions is the notorious fact that the transi-

tion, frequently as it occurs of late, is almost never made where any personal sacrifice, present or prospective, is involved. I do not allow myself to doubt that, in several instances, at least, educated men and ministers have felt constrained to give up old, and contract new, church relations; but I can scarcely recollect a case in which the change was made in the face of losses or sufferings. It is usually from low to higher salaries—from more to less labor or exposure—from less cultivated, or wealthy, or fashionable communities, to those deemed more so. I would not dare express or indulge distrust in regard to the motives which, in any particular instance, may have led to such changes; but the facts to which I have adverted are incontrovertible, as they are universally known. There are few observing or prominent Christians, I apprehend, who have not had some occasion to receive, in silence, the cutting rebukes which irreligious men are accustomed to visit on such transactions. I am free to confess that, in my opinion, no measure of blame or reproaches can possibly transcend the

demerits of a man who, for any reasons lower or weaker than such as are strictly conscientious and constraining, puts in jeopardy so many of the precious interests of religion. He betrays a sacred trust. Up to the full measure of his influence, and talents, and position, he inflicts a grievous wrong upon the communion in whose bosom he has been nurtured, or into which he has obtained admission. He diminishes its ability to do good, and casts a doubt on its purity, or orthodoxy. If a minister, set apart and ordained as a teacher of religion, and a dispenser of its holy sacraments, his power to do evil is greatly augmented, and with it the guilt of such a defection. His new investiture of ecclesiastical authority and dignity is equivalent to a public declaration that others are but rash intruders into the sacred office. He thus wounds their reputation and weakens their influence. As far as in him lies, he shakes the confidence of the people in their pastors, and despoils their message of its power over the sinner's conscience. He denies the character and immunities of

Christ's ministers, not to a few obscure individuals, but to nine-tenths of all the consecrated men upon whom the population of this great country depend for religious instruction and consolation. I am ready to admit that conviction may be so clear and controlling as to make it a good man's duty to act in defiance of all these considerations; but no sane mind can, for a moment, hesitate to believe that to do so, on lower grounds, is one of the gravest offenses against religion of which a human being can be guilty.

NOTE B —PAGE 32.

The strong tendency in our religious operations to gather the rich and the poor into separate folds, and so to generate and establish in the church distinctions utterly at variance with the spirit of our political institutions, is the very worst result of the multiplication of sects among us; and I fear it must be admitted that the evil is greatly aggravated by the otherwise benignant working of the voluntary system. Without insisting further upon the probable or possible injury which may befall our free country from this conflict of agencies, ever the most powerful in the formation of national and individual character, no one, I am sure, can fail to recognize in this development an influence utterly and irreconcilably hostile to the genius and cherished objects of Christianity. It is the peculiar glory of the gospel, that, even under the most arbitrary governments, it has usually been able to vindicate and practically exemplify the essential equality of

man. It has had one doctrine and one hope for all its children; and the highest and the lowest have been constrained to acknowledge one holy law of brotherhood in the common faith of which they are made partakers. Nowhere else, I believe, but in the United States—certainly nowhere else to the same extent—does this antichristian separation of classes prevail in the Christian church. The beggar in his tattered vestments walks the splendid courts of St. Peter's, and kneels at its costly altars by the side of dukes and cardinals. The peasant in his wooden shoes is welcomed in the gorgeous churches of Notre Dame and the Madeline; and even in England, where political and social distinctions are more rigorously enforced than in any other country on earth, the lord and the peasant, the richest and the poorest, are usually occupants of the same church, and partakers of the same communion. That the reverse of all this is true in many parts of this country, every observing man knows full well: and what is yet more deplorable, while the lines of demarkation

between the different classes have already become sufficiently distinct, the tendency is receiving new strength and development in a rapidly augmenting ratio. Even in country places, where the population is sparse, and the artificial distinctions of society are little known, the working of this strange element is, in many instances, made manifest, and a petty coterie of village magnates may be found worshiping God apart from the body of the people. But the evil is much more apparent, as well as more deeply seated, in our populous towns, where the causes which produce it have been longer in operation, and have more fully enjoyed the favor of circumstances. In these great centres of wealth, intelligence, and influence, the separation between the classes is, in many instances, complete, and in many more the process is rapidly progressive. There are crowded religious congregations composed so exclusively of the wealthy as scarcely to embrace an indigent family or individual; and the number of such churches, where the gospel is never preached to the poor,

is constantly increasing. Rich men, instead of associating themselves with their more humble fellow Christians, where their money as well as their influence and counsels are so much needed, usually combine to erect magnificent churches, in which sittings are too expensive for any but people of fortune, and from which their less-favored brethren are as effectually and peremptorily excluded as if there were dishonor or contagion in their presence. A congregation is thus constituted, able, without the slightest inconvenience, to bear the pecuniary burdens of twenty churches, monopolizing and consigning to comparative inactivity intellectual, moral, and material resources, for want of which so many other congregations are doomed to struggle with the most embarrassing difficulties. Can it for a moment be thought, that such a state of things is desirable, or in harmony with the spirit and design of the gospel?

A more difficult question arises when we inquire after a remedy for evils too glaring to be overlooked, and too grave to

be tolerated without an effort to palliate, if not to remove them. The most obvious palliative, and one which has already been tried to some extent by wealthy churches or individuals, is the erection of free places of worship for the poor. Such a provision for this class of persons would be more effectual in any other part of the world than in the United States. Whether it arises from the operation of our political system, or from the easy attainment of at least the prime necessities of life, the poorer classes here are characterized by a proud spirit, which will not submit to receive even the highest benefits in any form that implies inferiority or dependence. This strong and prevalent feeling must continue to interpose serious obstacles in the way of these laudable attempts. If in a few instances churches for the poor have succeeded in our large cities, where the theory of social equality is so imperfectly realized in the actual condition of the people, and where the presence of a multitude of indigent foreigners tends to lower the sentiment of independence so strong in

native-born Americans, the system is yet manifestly incapable of general application to the religious wants of our population. The same difficulty usually occurs in all attempts to induce the humbler classes to worship with the rich in sumptuous churches by reserving for their benefit a portion of the sittings free, or at a nominal rent. A few only can be found who are willing to be recognized and provided for as beneficiaries and paupers, while the multitude will always prefer to make great sacrifices in order to provide for themselves in some humbler fane. It must be admitted that this subject is beset with practical difficulties, which are not likely to be removed speedily, or without some great and improbable revolution in our religious affairs. Yet if the respectable Christian denominations most concerned in the subject shall pursue a wise and liberal policy for the future, something may be done to check the evil. They may retard its rapid growth, perhaps, though it will most likely be found impossible to eradicate it altogether. It ought to be well

understood, that the multiplication of magnificent churches is daily making the line of demarkation between the rich and the poor more and more palpable and impassable. There are many good reasons for the erection of such edifices. Increasing wealth and civilization seem to call for a liberal and tasteful outlay in behalf of religion, yet is it the dictate of prudence no less than of duty to balance carefully the good and the evil of every enterprise. It should ever be kept in mind, that such a church virtually writes above its sculptured portals an irrevocable prohibition to the poor, "*Procul o procul este profani.*"

I will not pretend to determine how far it might be wise, even if it were practicable, to check the liberal spirit now so active in multiplying sumptuous religious edifices. We have perhaps more encouragement to look in another direction for the melioration desired. There can be no doubt that a general increase of humble, spiritual religion would operate as a powerful check upon the prevailing disposition to prefer communion with opu-

lent congregations, rather than pursue the walks of a lowlier piety in company with the poor. The same good ends would be further promoted by the increasing prevalence of a liberal catholic spirit. A decided and simultaneous advance in piety and charity, though it should stop short of harmonizing conflicting sects and opinions, and bringing their votaries to worship in a common temple, might yet be sufficient to reach and considerably mitigate some of the greatest hardships to which I have adverted. In such an improved state of Christian sentiment, a congregation, or a sect, opulent in intellectual or pecuniary means, beyond the ratio of its numbers, might easily confer the greatest benefits on the feeble and destitute. A wealthy denomination with few of the poor under its ministry, and with little access to this class, would then be inclined to aid those who are providentially called to preach the gospel to the masses. How easily might one of our great metropolitan churches relieve a dozen poor congregations from the burden of debts, or other embarrassments,

under which they are left to struggle on from year to year! What inestimable benefits might a denomination, at once the smallest and richest, confer by aiding the poorer sects in extending the blessings of religion and education to the vast multitude placed by divine Providence under their influence and watchcare! Now it can hardly be doubted, that with such an enlargement of charity as I have supposed, there would come more enlarged views of duty and privilege, and that sectarian lines might cease to be insuperable barriers in the way of a far more exuberant and diffusive liberality than now prevails. Under such better auspices it would at least be no longer possible for opulent, enlightened Christian denominations to look with hostility or even indifference upon their fellow-laborers in the vineyard of a common Master. The sympathies as well as the resources of the whole Christian church would look about in quest of its wants and substantial interests: while there would inevitably arise bonds of brotherhood, so many and so strong, between all the mem-

bers of the one Christian family, as would go far to exclude all the petty jealousies and heart-burnings which wealth and position are sure to provoke in the church no less than in the world, when they forget their proper mission.

One lesson more, we should imagine, would be ineffaceably impressed upon those Christian denominations which, through providential means or their own special adaptations and exertions, monopolize a large portion of the influential classes, while they have signally failed of obtaining a corresponding development among the great body of the people. It is a lesson of enlarged catholic liberality. They have, in their relative position, a clear demonstration at least that others as well as they have a dispensation of the gospel committed to them. That, surely, cannot be the *only* apostolic and legitimate system of faith or polity, which, after an experiment carried through successive generations of men, has, in this country, shown itself essentially incapable of penetrating the masses. They who evangelize the wealthy, the

intellectual, and the refined, do unquestionably perform a good work ; and there may be those who have a special vocation to this inviting field. No liberal-minded Christian will undervalue their efforts, or desire to call in question the genuineness of their piety, or the validity of their ecclesiastical system ; but it may be well for all parties to remember that there are signs of apostleship older and surer than this mission to the rich ; and they need not despair of making good their claim to a part in this ministry who can appeal, as their Master did, to eminent success among the masses, and affirm, like him, that through their instrumentality “ the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and **THE POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED UNTO THEM.**”

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